

THE EFFECT OF CONFERENCE BRAND KNOWLEDGE
ON ATTENDEE BEHAVIORS

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Department of Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management & Dietetics

College of Human Ecology

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Abstract

This study, based on customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993), sought to identify key brand associations in brand knowledge and investigated attendees' behaviors as evidenced in a comparison of a professional association's major and regional conferences. The points of comparison were brand satisfaction, updated expectation of brand value (UEBV), brand trust, and attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL), especially the mediating effect of UEBV on brand trust-ABL link and the moderating effect of behavioral brand loyalty (BBL) within the brand trust-(UEBV)-brand loyalty link.

To identify the proposed paths and differential effect of brand knowledge across I-CHRIE annual conference (IC) and regional CHRIE conferences (RC), this study sampled I-CHRIE members attending IC and/ or RC, using an online survey system. The response rate was 20.1% (213 out of 1,036) for IC and 19.4% (201 out of 1,036) for RC. Confirmatory factor analysis and/or structural equation modeling were used to test construct validity and hypotheses.

Findings showed that professional education, staff service, site selection, and social networking are positively related to brand satisfaction, whereas brand awareness is negatively associated with it. Because brand satisfaction is a starting point in affecting UEBV, brand trust, and ABL, these four brand associations are presumed to be major sources of the differential effect of brand knowledge between IC and RC. Also, positive relationships existed on each path for brand satisfaction-UEBV, UEBV-brand trust, brand satisfaction-brand trust, and brand trust-ABL. It is especially important to look at the mediating effect of UEBV on brand satisfaction-brand trust path. UEBV was found to serve as a partial mediator on the brand satisfaction-brand trust path across the two groups. This result suggests that brand trust, the firm expectation that the brand will perform according to its promise, builds up through UEBV as well as through brand satisfaction.

This study further extended the proposed theoretical model by dividing it into high and low BBL groups designed to unveil the differential characteristics or mechanisms between two groups. Except for the brand trust-ABL path, BBL was found to moderate the direct path (brand satisfaction to brand trust) and the indirect path (brand satisfaction to brand trust via UEBV).

These findings support the notion that since high BBL attendees sustain longer relationships with a particular conference than low BBL attendees, high BBL attendees experience more cumulative satisfaction and update favorable expectations of brand value (through the perception of more [relational] benefits), thereby solidifying expectations about confidence in a brand (brand trust).

Brand loyalty holds invaluable benefits for associations when associations in similar disciplines compete for potential attendees. Benefits from brand loyal customers lower marketing costs and increase market share and profitability. Thus, associations should build their conference marketing and management on brand loyalty by carefully designing brand associations attendees consider important. Persistent delivery of high-quality education programs, venue selection, and social networking enables associations to obtain cumulative satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and consequently brand loyalty. Retention of brand loyal attendees induces deep commitment to the conferences and great resistance to other conferences' marketing strategies, thereby contributing to high revenue and market share.

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CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

Although leisure travelers account for large numbers in the tourism industry, convention attendees generally spend more (\$198 per day) than leisure travelers (\$158 per day) (Lee & Park, 2002). Convention attendees contribute to high revenue in the industry, as well as benefiting hotels and convention facilities by complementing off-season tourism and spreading positive word-of-mouth (Astroff & Abbey, 1998), thus significantly influencing the hospitality and tourism industry.

Association meetings represent the most important segment in the convention industry. These meetings account for 71% of direct expenditure in the convention industry (Alkjaer, 1993), 78% of all attendees, and 80% of all conventions and meetings (Edelstein & Benini, 1994). According to Astroff and Abbey (1998), US-based associations are comprised of about 5,000 national and international associations and about 15,000 state and regional associations. These associations contribute significantly to the hospitality and tourism industry with the large number of delegates they bring to conference destinations. Because of the importance of association meetings, hospitality and tourism researchers' interest in exploring association meeting attendee behaviors or their information processing has increased. The knowledge of attendee behaviors can help design competitive conference marketing and management strategies.

It is widely recognized that well-branded tradeshows, conferences, or other meetings will develop trust from participants and ensure committed repeat attendance (PCMA, 2002). The strong-branded meeting works against competitors in that it differentiates itself from them by delivering to attendees what is promised and unique (PCMA, 2002). The well-branded meeting is built on cumulative attendance experiences in attendees' minds. This study examines attendee behaviors from the perspective of conference brand equity.

A brand can be defined as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors” (Kotler, 1991, p. 442). Brand name can be represented in the memory as an associative network comprised of a central

concept denoting the brand and a number of specific features that have become associated with the concept through learning (Keller, 1998).

The brand becomes a symbol that reflects customer perceptions of the firm and its products and services (Keller, 1998). Specifically, it represents (1) a powerful means for creating and sustaining competitive advantage (Aaker, 1996; Aaker, 1997; Aggarwal, 2004; Fournier, 1998; Keller, 1993); (2) a hallmark of quality; (3) a promise or an assurance to the buyer; (4) a set of associations or expectations; and (5) an icon or an image that triggers a propensity by customers to purchase that brand's products (Prasad & Dev, 2000).

Brand equity has been conceptualized as having such incremental utility/value (Farquhar, Han, & Ijiri, 1991; Park & Srinivasan, 1994) or strength (Srivastava & Shocker, 1991) added to a product/service by its brand name. Brand equity has been regarded as an essential concept in business practice as well as in academic research because marketers can gain competitive advantage through successful brands. The competitive advantage of firms that have brands with high equity includes the opportunity for successful extensions, resilience against competitors' promotional pressures, and creation of barriers to competitive entry (Farquhar, 1989).

Basically, brand equity stems from the greater confidence that consumers place in one brand than they do in a competitor's. This confidence translates into increasing productivity and efficient marketing that result in consumers' positive brand attitudes, brand choice, and brand loyalty, and their willingness to pay a premium price for the brand (Keller, 1993). That is, brand equity presents to marketers a more thorough understanding of consumer behavior as a basis for making better strategic decisions about marketing actions as well as management.

In its investigation of attendee behaviors, this paper was based on Keller's (1993, p. 2) conceptualization of customer-based brand equity as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand." The definition delineates consumer behavior through the differential effect of brand knowledge composed of two dimensions: brand awareness and a set of brand associations or brand images in the consumer's mind. In this study, a professional association's major and regional meetings were sampled to identify the differential effect of brand knowledge by

comparing them to each other in terms of brand satisfaction, Updated Expectation of Brand Value (UEBV), brand trust, and behavioral and attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL) based on attendees' previous experiences at meetings. The brand knowledge and its differential effect, which have arisen from the brand in attendee minds, provide valuable information for associations as they explore attendee behaviors.

Statement of Problems

Recently, more attention has been paid to the validity of managing and marketing association meetings due to (1) the growing number of associations competing for attendees (Loverseed, 1993), (2) high portion of revenue (about 30.2% of their annual income) derived from annual meetings (Shure, 2004), (3) increasing conference expenses borne by association members (Hoyle, Dorf, & Jones, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997), and (4) their participation decision-making influenced by the perception of the destination and the conference organizers and attendees' needs, desires, and financial factors (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). Hence, both academics and practitioners are increasingly concerned with attendees' behaviors as these provide a basis for designing conference management and marketing.

In the wake of this momentum, interest has been growing in conference attendee behaviors. From the perspective of attendee behaviors, existing convention literature largely focuses on the site selection process (Go & Govers, 1999; Hu & Hiemstra, 1996) and the meeting participation process (Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993; Um & Crompton, 1992). These studies identified criteria and factors of site selection and conceptualized meeting participation process by examining motivators, facilitators, and inhibitors to convention attendance, which contributed to managerial and research implications for the convention industry. However, relative to the hospitality and tourism literature, the convention literature lags far behind in in-depth research. A more detailed and diverse approach should be used in research on attendee behaviors.

Despite the well-recognized significance of the brand equity concept in the business and service literature, no study has been published in the convention literature on conference brand equity in which the various brand associations with brand awareness comprise brand knowledge and lead to the differential effect of brand knowledge, thereby

revealing consumer (attendee) behavior in detail (Keller, 1993). It is therefore necessary to base this research on brand equity that acts to illuminate attendee behaviors. Results will address the research gap between convention and other service literature.

Purpose and Objectives

Founded on customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993), the purposes of the study were:

1. To identify key brand associations in a brand knowledge;
2. To investigate attendees' behaviors through (a) the flow from brand knowledge (brand associations and brand awareness) to the differential effect of brand knowledge, as captured by comparing a professional association's major meeting with its regional conference in terms of mean scores of brand satisfaction, updated expectation of brand value (UEBV), brand trust, and attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL), (b) the mediating effect of UEBV on brand satisfaction-brand trust link, and (c) the moderating effect of behavioral brand loyalty (BBL) within brand satisfaction-(UEBV)-brand trust link; and
3. To provide in-depth research and managerial implications about conference attendees' behaviors from which sound conference management and marketing approaches and practices are suggested.

Significance of the Study

A conference is not a tangible product that attendees can pretest or touch. Just like other service products, attending conferences involves high perceived risks arising from intangible attributes (e.g., education and social networking). The perceived risk is also attributable to other service characteristics: simultaneous production and consumption and heterogeneity. In other words, attending conferences leaves participants with an experience that is created by the inseparability of service production and consumption, making it hard for attendees to pre-evaluate its service product. Moreover, the experience is heterogeneous to every attendee because he or she has different evaluative criteria and expectations. These characteristics make it difficult to deliver the clear picture of the service and to reduce the perceived risk.

A key to success in service marketing is to "tangibilize the intangible" (Berry, 1986, p. 6; Levitt, 1981, p. 101). An effective way of increasing the tangible nature of a service is to use a brand as an extrinsic cue or an icon. As already mentioned, the brand serves as a symbol or an icon that represents a number of specific features associated with a service provider and that provides assurance to customers. That is, a conference with high brand equity is viewed as having lower perceived risk because the brand significantly reduces perceived risk by tangibilizing the intangible aspect of conference.

Another unique characteristic of the service product is the different source of brand power. The service company name is the primary brand, whereas a product name in manufacturing is regarded as the primary brand (Berry, 2000; Low & Lamb, 2000). For instance, consumers may buy chip or coffee brand without exactly recognizing the company name, while customers patronizing the Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (I-CHRIE) annual conference or the Marriott hotel purchase the association or company brand itself. That is, customers patronizing the service generally select or reject the service product based on the brand name (Kim, Kim, & An, 2003).

Given characteristics of service product, the presence of brand equity cannot be overemphasized in the service literature. Cultivating strong brands with high equity improves (1) the probability of brand choice, (2) the brand performance, (3) cash flow, (4) the willingness to pay a premium, (5) marketing productivity, (6) product positioning, and (7) brand knowledge in consumers' minds (Keller, 1993; Simon & Sullivan, 1993). A conference with high brand equity would therefore be assumed to enhance the efficiency and productivity of marketing and brand loyalty, thereby maintaining high revenues and competitive positioning in the meeting market.

Several hospitality researchers conducted brand equity research in the hotel and restaurant industry. Kim and Kim (2004) investigated the brand equity of fast food restaurants using four dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image, and perceived quality. Prasad and Dev (2000) examined what constitutes brand equity in the hotel industry through brand awareness and brand performance index. Brand equity research provides a more detailed and comprehensive picture of the brand mechanism as well as consumer behavior because the brand equity research (Aaker, 1996; Berry, 2000; Keller, 1993; Farquhar, 1989; Yoo & Donthu, 2001) spans various brand factors,

including brand awareness, brand associations, brand image, brand trust, brand personality, and brand loyalty.

Founded on customer-based brand equity, conference brand equity from the perspective of attendees (referred to as attendee-based brand equity) should capture a richer and more detailed picture of attendee consumption experiences from which practical implications may be derived. The findings may also contribute theoretically and empirically to the understanding of constructs that explain attendee behaviors and practices within attendee-brand relationships.

Hypotheses

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were established:

Hypothesis 1

Professional education is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2

Social networking is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3

Site selection is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4

Staff service is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5

Self-image congruence is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6

Brand awareness is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 7

Brand satisfaction is positively associated with brand trust.

Hypothesis 8

Brand satisfaction is positively associated with UEBV.

Hypothesis 9

UEBV is positively associated with brand trust.

Hypothesis 10

Brand trust is positively associated with ABL.

Hypothesis 11a

Brand satisfaction is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11b

UEBV is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11c

Brand trust is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11d

ABL is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 12

Indirect path from brand satisfaction to brand trust via brand trust is stronger to high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Hypothesis 13

Direct path from brand satisfaction to brand trust is stronger to high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Hypothesis 14

Brand trust-ABL path is stronger to high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Definition of Terms

Customer-Based Brand Equity: “Differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993, p. 8).

Brand Association: Brand associations are other informational nodes (e.g., tangible and intangible attributes, benefits, and attitude) linked to the brand node - only brand information (e.g., brand name and logo) stored in consumer memory—and embrace the meaningful information about the brand for consumers (Keller, 1993).

Brand Awareness: Brand awareness is “the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Aaker, 1991, p. 61).

Brand Knowledge: The knowledge that has been inextricably intertwined with the brand in the customer’s mind significantly influences the consumer information process for a brand. Brand knowledge is composed of two dimensions: brand awareness and brand associations (Keller, 1993).

Brand Satisfaction: Overall satisfaction is characterized by a cumulative construct that has been evaluated by expectations and perceived performance as well as past satisfaction (Johnson, Anderson, & Fornell, 1995). Brand satisfaction in this study is operationalized as overall satisfaction with brand based on previous attendance experiences.

Brand Trust: Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande (1992, p. 315) defined trust as “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence.”

Updated Expectation: The adaptive expectation model explains the formation of individual expectations whereby individuals’ prior beliefs and expectations are easily updated to cumulated or current information during or after consumption (Oliver, 1997; Yi & La, 2004).

Brand Value: This study defined brand value as the perceived brand benefit relative to its costs of keeping up a relationship with a conference, as assessed by attendees.

Attitudinal Brand Loyalty: Attitudinal brand loyalty includes a degree of dispositional commitment in terms of some unique value associated with the brand” (Chaudhur & Holbrook, 2001, p. 82).

Behavioral Brand Loyalty: Behavioral brand loyalty is reflected by repeated patronage of the brand (Chaudhur & Holbrook, 2001).

Updated Expectation of Brand Value (UEBV): In this study, the construct of UEBV was coined as an exploratory approach. The expectation of brand value is adaptive to cumulative or current information about brand value as perceived through brand trust. Newly formed UEBV affects repeat attendance intention

CHAPTER 2 - Review of Literature

This chapter presents a literature review on brand equity and a theoretical model. The review has three sections: (1) previous studies on brand equity and its implications, (2) detailed statements of the theoretical model, and (3) explications of hypotheses and constructs adopted in the model.

Brand Equity

Brand name is viewed as a “summary” construct (Han, 1989; Johansson, 1989) or high scope cue (Zeithaml, 1988) for quality since brand name provides its product or service quality inferences and implications of the attributes associated with its product or service. A good indicator of whether or not the brand is powerful is brand equity (Aaker, 1996; Berry, 2000; Keller, 1993). Strong brands contribute to enhancing consumers’ trust of the intangible purchase, tangibilizing the intangible goods, and reducing the perceived risk of the service purchase by assisting customers in visualizing and understanding intangible aspects of the service product (Berry, 2000).

Definitions

Several researchers provided subtly different forms and definitions of brand equity. Brand equity is described as:

1. “A set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” (Aaker, 1991, p. 15);
2. “The differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993, p. 2);
3. The power that a brand may command in a market by means of its name, symbol, or logo (Farquhar, 1989);
4. The incremental utility or value added to a product by its brand name (Farquhar, Han, & Ijir, 1991);
5. Favorable impressions, attitudinal dispositions, and behavioral predilections (Rangaswamy, Burke, & Oliva, 1993);
6. Loyalty and image (Shocker & Weitz, 1988);

7. The difference between overall brand preference and multiattributed preference based on objectively measured attribute level (Park & Srinivasan, 1994); and
8. Overall quality and choice intention (Agarwal & Rao, 1996).

This study is built on Keller's (1993) definition of customer-based brand equity.

Previous Studies on Brand Equity

As illustrated in Table 1, brand equity research is largely categorized into two areas: financial and marketing streams. From the financial perspective, brand equity has been estimated for the financial market value of the firm, incremental cash flow, stock valuations (Barth, Clement, Foster & Kasznik, 1998; Simon & Sullivan, 1993), and acquisition decisions (Mahajan, Rao, & Srivastava, 1994). In the marketing stream, brand equity has been shown to conceptualize its measurement (Park & Srinivasan, 1994; Yoo & Donthu, 2001); its impacts on price premium, market share, firm performance, purchase intention (Baldauf, Cravens & Binder, 2003; Barwise, 1993; Farquhar et al., 1991; Kim & Kim, 2004; Park & Srinivasan, 1994; Smith & Park, 1992); and the effects of marketing mix on its dimensions (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000).

Much brand equity research has drawn upon dimensions postulated by Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) to conceptualize, measure, and manage brand equity. According to Aaker (1991, 1996), brand equity can be created, maintained, and expanded by strengthening the dimensions of brand equity: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand assets. Aaker (1991) stated that brand equity creates value for both a customer and a firm. The brand value to a customer, generally referred to as customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993), is enhanced through "customers' interpretation of information, confidence in the purchase decision, and use satisfaction" on the dimensions (Aaker, 1996, p. 9). Keller (1993) contended that customer-based brand equity is improved by positive brand knowledge composed of two dimensions: brand awareness and a favorable, strong, and unique set of brand associations in the memory.

Insert Table 2.1 About Here

Yoo et al. (2000) built on the models of Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993) to explore marketing efforts and the resulting effects on the dimensions of brand equity. Specifically, they investigated the effects of marketing mix on three particular dimensions of brand equity: brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand awareness with strong brand association, and explored the relationships of dimensions with the brand equity. Unique to their study is that they melted two dimensions (brand awareness and brand association) into one dimension (brand awareness with brand association) because discriminant validity between these two dimensions was not confirmed (Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

Kim and Kim (2004) also used the brand equity dimensions (brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand image) proposed by Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993) to examine the relationship between customer-based restaurant brand equity and revenue. Yoo et al. (2000) and Kim and Kim (2004) both treated brand equity dimensions as independent variables to identify their relationships with brand equity.

Moreover, the customer-based brand equity enhances the brand value to the firm (referred to as firm-based brand equity) by strengthening “efficiency and effectiveness of marketing program, brand loyalty, prices/margins, brand extensions, and competitive advantage” (Aaker, 1996, p. 9). The firm-based brand equity can be manifested in monetary units—e.g., Coca Cola, \$69.6 billion; IBM, \$51.2 billion, and Nike, \$7.7 billion (Leiser, 2004). The effect of high brand equity, comprising customer and firm-based brand equity, contributes to overcoming competition by differentiating the product, allowing brand owners to charge a price premium as well as fueling customer loyalty (Aaker, 1991, 1996).

Theoretical Model

Keller (1993) delineated a detailed perspective of customer-based brand equity (see Figure 2.1). Keller (1993, p. 2) conceptualized customer-based brand equity as “the

differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.” Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is aware of the brand

Insert Figure 2.1 About Here

with some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in the memories that make up positive brand knowledge. The core concept of his model draws on “brand knowledge” comprised of two dimensions: brand awareness and a set of brand associations or brand image.

Brand awareness consists of both brand recognition and recall (Keller, 1993; Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Brand associations are other informational nodes (e.g., tangible and intangible attributes, benefits, and attitude) linked to the brand node, only brand information (e.g., brand name and logo) stored in consumer memory, and provide meaningful information about the brand for consumers (Keller, 1993). Krishnan (1996) also argued that associations may be used as a general term to serve as a link between any two nodes, suggesting an association between brand node and other informational nodes in the consumer's mind.

The associative network model (Anderson, 1983) underlies the mechanism of brand association. According to the associative network model, memory of a concept consists of a network of nodes and links among these nodes. The nodes represent other stored information, including the brand node, and the links denote the strength of associations among nodes. In the context of brands, consumers have a brand node linked to various other informational nodes (Keller, 1998), which comes to brand associations.

Also, Keller (1993) suggested that positive brand knowledge favorably transforms customer perceptions, preference, and behavior toward the marketing mix, thereby leading to positive brand attitude, brand choice, and brand loyalty. Such effects of brand knowledge represent “differential effect” in the definition of customer-based brand equity. This proposition by Keller (1993) has been well supported in the marketing

stream where brand equity improves price premium, market share, firm performance, and purchase intention (Baldauf, Cravens & Binder, 2003; Kim & Kim, 2004; Park & Srinivasan, 1994; Smith & Park, 1992).

Insert Figure 2.2 About Here

Drawing on customer-based brand equity by Keller (1993), this study conceptualizes the theoretical model (see Figure 2.2) to capture the differential effect of brand knowledge reflected by brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL, most of which are frequently used in the marketing literature to measure customer response to brand marketing. Thus, this study sampled I-CHRIE's annual conference and regional CHRIE conferences and compared them to each other within the mean scores of brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL. This was done to disclose the differential effect of brand knowledge by identifying which meeting had a higher mean score in terms of brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL. Brand trust and UEBV were adopted from the viewpoint of relationship marketing and expectation mechanisms. This allowed the study to postulate the mediating role of UEBV and different functions by high and low behavioral brand loyal attendees within the brand trust-(UEBV)-ABL link, which awaits theoretical and empirical validation. Further elaboration of the model was presented as an explication of constructs.

Explication of Constructs and Hypotheses

Brand Satisfaction

Satisfaction has been defined in several ways. It is largely conceptualized as (1) "an evaluation rendered that the consumption experience was at least as good as it was supposed to be" (Hunt, 1977, p. 459); (2) "the consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption" (Tse & Wilton, 1988, p. 204); (3) "an

emotional response to the experiences provided by, associated with particular products or services purchased, retail outlets, or even molar patterns of behavior such as shopping and buyer behavior, as well as the overall market place” (Westbrook & Reilly, 1983, p. 256); and (4) “the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer’s prior feelings about the consumption experience” (Oliver, 1981, p. 27). These definitions reflect overall positive affect and a focal buyer’s overall contentment with the relationship with an exchange party.

In this paper, the definition of overall (cumulative) satisfaction was used: “an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time” (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann 1994, p. 54). Overall satisfaction is characterized by a cumulative construct that has been evaluated by expectations and perceived performance as well as past satisfaction (Johnson, Anderson, & Fornell, 1995).

Overall satisfaction is distinct from transaction-specific satisfaction shaped by instant evaluative judgment of the most recent postconsumption experience (Oliver 1993). Applied market research is more inclined to base customer satisfaction on the overall level of satisfaction with various facets of a company than an episode-specific satisfaction (Czepiel, Rosenberg, & Akerele 1974). Brand satisfaction in this study was operationalized as overall satisfaction with a brand based on previous attendance experiences that incur brand associations and brand awareness in an attendee’s mind.

Brand Knowledge: Brand Awareness and Brand Associations

Brand knowledge is posited to serve as an invaluable contributor to enhancing marketing efficiency in that the knowledge that has been inextricably intertwined with the brand in a customer’s mind significantly influences the consumer information process of a brand (Keller, 1993). Thus, it is worthwhile to examine how the dimensions of brand knowledge affect and predict attendee behaviors.

Consumer brand knowledge relates to the cognitive representation of the brand (Peter & Olson, 2001). Consumer brand knowledge can be defined in terms of the personal meaning about a brand stored in consumer memory, that is, all descriptive and evaluative brand associations and brand awareness (Keller, 2003). Brand knowledge

consisting of strong brand awareness with positive (favorable, strong, and unique) brand associations favorably affects customer perceptions, preference, and behavior toward marketing mix and consequently overall brand attitude, brand choice, and loyalty (Keller, 1993). This indicates that brand satisfaction is highly distinguished by positive brand knowledge composed of strong brand awareness with positive brand associations. Building on Keller's (1993) model, this study examined conference brand knowledge through brand awareness and associations based on the past experiences of conference attendees.

Brand Associations-Brand Satisfaction Path

Aaker (1991, p. 109) contended that brand associations are defined as “anything linked in memory to a brand”, which is consistent with Keller's (1993) line of reasoning that brand associations are other informational nodes linked to the brand node. Moreover, Keller (1993) pointed out that the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of brand associations are the dimensions discriminating brand knowledge that underlie the differential response to the marketing of a brand, especially in high involvement decision settings. That is, brand equity is supported on a large scale by the associations that consumers attach to a brand.

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) categorized brand associations into several types; the common types of brand associations are (1) attributes, (2) customer benefits, (3) usage and user imagery, (4) personality, (5) celebrity/endorser of product/service, and (6) geographic area/country of origin. Attributes and customer benefits are deeply involved in brand associations in that they characterize the product/service and provide a reason to buy the brand (Aaker, 1991). Each attribute pairs with the corresponding benefit since it supplies the benefit (Aaker, 1991).

Usage and user imagery can be developed from consumer exposure to advertising, contact with brand users, and experience of the brand (Keller, 1993). Usage and user imagery reveal how consumers express life-styles, social positions, and themselves through products (Aaker, 1991), which in turn arouses brand personality. Brand is characterized by personality descriptors such as “young,” “tough,” and “glamorous” (Aaker, 1997).

Moreover, Keller (1993) classified celebrity/endorser of product/service and geographic area/country of origin as secondary brand associations that occur when the brand node is linked to other information not directly related to the product/service in consumer memory. These secondary associations may reflect such global associations as credibility and attitude or more specific attributes and benefits for the product or service (Keller, 1993). The brand strategies associated with country of origin (e.g., Japanese automobiles and Swiss watches) or celebrity (e.g., Tiger Woods with Nike and Catherine Zeta Jones with T-Mobile) can indirectly transfer the information's credibility and reputation to the product/service. In the context of the conference, this study adopted attributes, customer benefits, self-image congruence, and geographic area, each of which is elaborated upon here.

This study measured perceived quality of a conference to reflect its attributes and corresponding benefits. The perceived quality is related to four brand associations: professional education, social networking, site selection (geographic area), and staff service. Professional education, social networking, and site selection are especially important constructs in the convention literature (Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993; Rittichainuwat, Beck, & Lalopa, 2001) since they are significantly involved in the conference participation decision-making process.

Attendees are motivated to keep up with new trends in their areas or to be present at a keynote session by a famous speaker. Professional education is a major benefit of attending conferences and thus motivates people to attend conferences (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993). Professional education can be construed from achievement motivation. According to Butler (1999), people's achievement goals affect their achievement-related attitudes, which include task-involvement. Task-involvement is a motivational state in which a person's main goal is to acquire skills and understanding to achieve self-satisfaction (Butler, 1999). To increase satisfaction with a conference, the educational programs most association meetings offer should be designed to satisfy attendees' achievement motivation.

Hypothesis 1

Professional education is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Attendees believe that a conference provides an opportunity for them to develop new business and professional relationships. According to Madsen (2003), social networking occurs when someone invites you to engage in relations, and a significant key competence in relationships is negotiation of personal meaning. Those who fail to establish this code of interaction may feel isolated and excluded, thereby reducing satisfaction (Brown, 2001). Expanding new relationships with other colleagues or professionals thus serves to motivate participation in a conference (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993) and contributes to satisfaction with the conference in providing attendees with informal, beneficial information on industry trends, job opportunities, and business events (Price, 1993).

Hypothesis 2

Social networking is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Geographic area can be interpreted as site selection in the context of conferences; conferences are held in a geographic area. Site selection has been a key in conference management and marketing (Go & Govers, 1999; Oppermann, 1996) in that it determines the attendance level and thus the success of the meeting. Influential attributes in site selection have been identified as traveling costs, accessibility, safety/security, climate, and extra conference opportunities (e.g., shopping, sightseeing, recreation, and entertainment) that meeting planners consider in selecting a destination (Oppermann, 1996). Therefore, such attributes associated with conference destination can serve as an extrinsic cue that prospective attendees use as a basis for deciding to participate. Positive experiences with the conference venue would contribute to overall satisfaction with the conference.

Hypothesis 3

Site selection is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Service quality has been widely known to comprise five dimensions (reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles) (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) and treated as attitude (Bitner, 1990). La Tour and Peat (1979) indicated that whereas attitude is a preconsumption construct, satisfaction is post experience construct. This supports that service quality is an antecedent to satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988). Cronin and Taylor initially hypothesized that satisfaction affects service

quality. However, findings from multi-industry sample showed the reverse relationship. Such a relationship was further confirmed by Spreng and Mackooy (1996), who tested the revised version of model established by Oliver (1993) and by Deruyter, Bloemer, and Peeters (1997), who examined the relationship in the health care setting. In this study, staff service is closely related to all of the service quality dimensions but tangibles, and hence significantly contributes to the formation of service attitude, resulting in increased attendee satisfaction with the conference.

Hypothesis 4

Staff service is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

User imagery is defined as “the set of human characteristics (traits) associated with the typical user of a brand (Aaker, 1997, p. 348).” Self-image congruence is defined as the congruence between product/brand user image and self-image construed from multiple self-concepts (Sirgy, Grewal, Mangleburg, Park, Chon, Claiborne, Johar, & Berkman, 1997). According to Sirgy (1980, 1982), a multidimensional self-image is composed of (1) actual self-image—how an individual in fact sees him/herself; (2) ideal self-image—how an individual would like to see him/herself; (3) social self-image—how an individual feels others see him/herself; and (4) ideal social-self image—how an individual would like others to see him/herself.

This study adopts self-image congruence rather than user imagery for the following reasons. First, self-image congruence is a broader and more powerful brand association encompassing user imagery by looking at both user image and multiple self-images. Self-image congruence strengthens the brand associated with a particular user image by identifying the user image congruent with target consumers’ self images (Sirgy et al., 1997). Second, considering social networking with other attendees motivates meeting participation, it is noteworthy to examine which dimension in self-image would be the most congruent with the generalized image of conference attendees. This would provide precious implications in (re)positioning a conference in target attendees’ self-images. Finally, relative to self-image congruence, user imagery is not enough to predict consumer behavior until it significantly affects brand personality that predicts trust and loyalty (Fournier, 1994). Self-image congruence, however, has been used to predict satisfaction in a tourist destination (Chon, 1990), a restaurant (Wang, 1990), and a hotel

(Back, 2005) as well as brand use, brand attitude, and purchase motivation in the marketing literature (Sirgy et al., 1997) because of the correspondence arising from a psychological comparison between product/brand user image and the consumer's multiple self-concepts (Sirgy et al., 1997).

Self-image congruence is an important predictor of satisfaction. Back (2005) found out that self-image congruence significantly affects customer satisfaction in the lodging industry, suggesting that hotel guests enhance their satisfaction when perceiving high level of image congruence. In the jewelry market setting, Jamal and Goode (2001) empirically investigated the effects of image congruence on customer satisfaction. Their findings indicated that customers with higher levels of image congruence were more likely to be satisfied with the brand as compared to those with lower levels of image congruence. Self-image congruence-brand satisfaction relationship can be construed from a need for social approval and consistency (Sirgy et al., 1997). Specifically, to obtain social approval, people would be likely to behave in ways congruent with how significant others perceive them. Also, due to the need for social consistency, they would tend to be consistent with how others perceive them. That is, high self-image congruence meets the need for social approval and consistency, thereby leading to satisfaction (Back, 2005). Accordingly, the low gap between self-image and the image of generalized conference attendees would induce satisfaction with the conference by sustaining attendees' social approval and consistency. That is, high self-image congruence can favorably influence overall evaluation of consumption experience with brand.

Hypothesis 5

Self-image congruence is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Brand Awareness-Brand Satisfaction Path

Brand awareness is "the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (Aaker, 1991, p. 61). Similarly, Keller (1993) postulated that brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall performance. Specifically, brand recognition refers to the consumer ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand using a given brand as a cue, and brand recall represents the consumer ability to retrieve the brand in a given product category (Keller, 1993).

Pitta and Katsanis (1995) noted that the most important aspect of brand awareness is forming a brand node in the memory in the first place. A brand awareness memory node is necessary before any brand associations can be formed. Without an established brand node in the memory, building a brand association is impossible. Brand awareness is therefore related to the strength of the brand node as reflected by consumers' ability to identify the brand under different conditions (Rossiter & Percy, 1987) and increases the likelihood of the brand being selected as consideration set at the point of purchase (Yoo et al., 2000). Also, brand awareness favorably contributes to a service provider. Kim et al. (2003) and Kim and Kim (2004) conducted research on a hotel and on fast food restaurants, respectively. Their findings show that brand awareness is positively related to hotel financial performance and brand equity of the restaurants, which indirectly implies that a service provider with high brand awareness is likely to satisfy customers who in turn patronize it.

Hypothesis 6

Brand awareness is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Direct Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust

Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande (1992, p. 315) defined trust as “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence.” Another definition of trust is that it is a “generalized expectancy” of how an exchange partner will perform in the future (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Moorman et al., 1992). A “generalized expectancy” is elicited both from a type of cultural environment of how firms are expected to perform and from encounters within the relationship (Sabel, 1993).

These definitions embrace two general streams of trust in the literature (Dwyer & Lagace, 1986). First, considerable research in marketing regards trust as a belief, or expectation about an exchange partner's trustworthiness attributed to the partner's expertise and reliability (Anderson & Weitz, 1990; Schurr & Ozanne, 1985).

Second, trust has been treated as a behavioral intention that signifies a reliance on a partner and imposes susceptibility and uncertainty on the part of the trustor (Coleman, 1990; Schlenker, Helm, & Tedeschi, 1973; Zand, 1972). This perspective implies that, without susceptibility, trust is not needed because results are trivial to the trustor. It also

suggests that uncertainty is an essential part of trust because trust would not be required if the trustor could exercise full control or knowledge over an exchange partner's actions (Coleman, 1990).

Therefore, the literature of trust indicates that trusted service providers are dependable and relied on with a “generalized expectancy” of delivering what they promise. In consonance with the definitions, this study slightly modifies Chaudhuri and Holbrook’s (2001) definition and refers to brand trust as the confidence of average attendees in the reliability and integrity of the brand with a firm expectation that the brand performs its stated function.

The process by which consumers attribute a trust to the brand is founded on their postconsumption experiences with the brand. Trust is affected by various encounters (e.g., advertising, word-of-mouth, usage, satisfaction) with the brand (Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996). When attendees are satisfied with a particular conference, they shape the confidence that the conference will deliver what is promised and see much less perceived risk associated with the conference than unfamiliar conferences. Transforming brand satisfaction into brand trust, however, requires repeatedly positive consumption experiences because a committed relationship between buyer and seller develops over time as they learn each other (Dywer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). That is, the overall postconsumption experience has more effect on trust than other episodic contacts with the brand because it creates feelings that are more self-relevant and associated with certainty (Dywer et al., 1987; Krishnan, 1996). Specifically, the overall satisfaction induces trust (Ganesan, 1994) by contributing to brand confidence in fulfilling its commercial promise and protecting consumer welfare and interest. The brand satisfaction is thus assumed to be positively associated with brand trust.

Hypothesis 7

Brand satisfaction is positively associated with brand trust.

Indirect Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust via UEBV

Customer satisfaction may not always lead to loyalty. Some studies have found that satisfaction directly affected repurchase, but other studies show that satisfaction does not necessarily lead to higher repurchase (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Stewart, 1997). Much

attention, therefore, has been gone into the study of trust to shed a light on such an inconsistent phenomenon. In this study, the construct of UEBV is coined as an exploratory approach to elaborate on the brand satisfaction-brand trust path.

One of the important value traits is “perceived,” not “actual.” The value of the same product or service may vary with customer perception of price and quality surrounded by the value. Also, their perceived value may also be affected by contextual and situational variables that influence what they must pay to get something in return. According to Monroe (1990, p. 46), “buyers’ perceptions of value represent a tradeoff between the quality or benefits they perceive in the product relative to the sacrifice they perceive by paying the price.” Monroe and Krishnan (1985) stated that consumers determine value by mentally trading off perceived quality with perceived sacrifice.

Consistent with previous value-related studies (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991; Monroe, 1990; Zeithaml, 1988), Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol (2002, p. 21) defined value as “the consumer’s perception of the benefits (e.g., perceived quality and convenience) minus the costs (e.g., money, time, and efforts) of maintaining an ongoing relationship with a service provider.” This study draws on their definition to operationalize the brand value since the definition reflects a relationship perspective whereby trust is a cornerstone of relationship marketing (Berry, 1996) and commitment or loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Thus, this study defined the brand value as the perceived brand benefit relative to its costs, assessed by attendees, of keeping up a relationship with a conference.

UEBV may be construed from the mechanism of expectation. An expectation is an “anticipation of future consequences based on prior experience, current circumstances, or other sources of information.” (Tryon, 1994, p. 313) and is updated to cumulative or current information during or after satisfaction—the overall evaluation of consumption experience (Oliver, 1997; Yi & La, 2004).

The mechanism of updated expectations can be more easily reflected in the adaptive expectation model (Johnson et al., 1995) that individual expectations form as individuals’ prior beliefs and expectations are updated to cumulative or current information during or after consumption. The updated expectation becomes a prior expectation used as a standard in judging future consumption experience (Yi, 1990). This

loop, moving back and forth between the prior and updated expectation, will be maintained as the learning of satisfaction (consumption experiences) continues to take place.

According to Oliver (1997), customers patronize services with expectations that the services will fulfill their values, desires, and needs. Specifically, the expectation of value, desire, and need (three expectation components) shapes expectation, and three expectation components are presumed to be adjusted to transactional or cumulative satisfaction. Among three components, this study focused on the expectation of value from two perspectives. First, because value is inferred from satisfaction (Patterson & Spreng, 1997; Strandvik & Liljander, 1994), expectation of brand value is updated to satisfaction. Value is a cognitive-based construct determined by discrepancy from trade-off of benefit and sacrifice. The formation of value is in much the same way satisfaction is shaped by (dis)confirmation between performance and expectation. On the other hand, satisfaction is an affective response. Value can be perceived from satisfaction in the sense that cognitive process induces affective responses, according to seminal work in the social sciences (Weiner, 1986). Second, the value serves as a crucial constituent of relationship marketing (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996) to affect brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) by providing more (relational) benefits than sacrifice, which will be more elaborated from the UEBV-brand trust path. In summary, the positive effect of brand satisfaction on UEBV rests on the premise that attendees favorably update the expectation of the brand value as they learn new and cumulative information from episodic or cumulative satisfaction.

Hypothesis 8

Brand satisfaction is positively associated with UEBV.

As noted earlier, the definition of brand trust in this study views trust as an expectation about confidence in an exchange partner. The positive effect of UEBV on brand trust builds on the reasoning that attendees' favorable UEBV firms up the expectation about confidence in a conference through more (relational) benefits, perceived from UEBV, of sustaining ongoing relationship with the conference. Especially, relational benefits that enhance value (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002) contribute to

favorable UEBV and hence brand trust by reinforcing the long-term relationship in a reciprocal manner (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998).

Relational benefits are conceptualized as the benefits customers gain from long-term relationships going beyond service performance (Gwinner et al., 1998). Gwinner et al. (1998) postulated that relational benefits consist of social benefits, confidence benefits, economic benefits, and special treatment benefits. Social benefits are represented by feelings of personal recognition, friendship, rapport, familiarity, and social support (Barnes, 1994; Berry, 1995). Confidence benefits suggest feelings of low risk and security. The concepts of confidence and trust may be inextricably intertwined and indeed look similar. The confidence benefit, however, is regarded as a distinct benefit from long-term relationships, especially when customers evaluate service providers alike by quality (Gwinner et al., 1998). Economic benefits could include eligibility for special pricing awarded from long-term relational exchange. Lastly, special treatment benefits are perceived as additional favors or preferential treatment not normally available for regular customers. The findings of the Gwinner et al. (1998) study showed that customers rated confidence benefits as the most important benefit, followed by social and special treatment benefits.

Similarly, Raval and Grönroos (1996) posited that critical components of relationship value are safety, credibility, security, and continuity that enhance trust. Trust builds up as attendees feel safety, reliable, and confident with a conference after a few positive consumption experiences. In conclusion, generalized expectancy of conference performance in the near future (brand trust) is further strengthened through (relational) benefits, as signified by UEBV that is based on cumulative brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 9

UEBV is positively associated with brand trust.

Path from Brand Trust to ABL

Jacoby and Chestnut (1978, pp. 31–32) defined brand loyalty with six required conditions: “(1) a biased (i.e., nonrandom), (2) behavioral response (i.e., purchase), (3) expressed over time, (4) of some decision-making unit, (5) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (6) is a function of evaluative

(decision-making) processes.” Oliver (1997, p. 392) also defined brand loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.” These two definitions manifest the two different aspects of brand loyalty: behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Day, 1969).

Behavioral brand loyalty (BBL) is comprised of repeated patronage of the brand while “ABL includes a degree of dispositional commitment in terms of some unique value associated with the brand” (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). BBL is operationalized as a repurchase probability (Carpenter & Lehmann, 1985) as measured by the proportion of times attendees participate in the same conference in a particular category compared to the total number of attendances in the category. ABL is assessed by intention of word-of-mouth (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993), repurchase intention (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), and willingness-to-pay premium price (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman, 1996).

The findings of the study by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) indicated that brand trust affects ABL. Their study builds on brand commitment in relationship marketing (Fournier 1998; Gundlach, Achrol, & Mentzer 1995; Moorman et al., 1992; Morgan & Hunt 1994; Webster 1992). Commitment has been defined as “an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship” (Moorman et al., 1992, p. 316). Moorman et al. (1992) and Morgan and Hunt (1994) found that trust leads to commitment in business-to-business relational exchanges because relationships characterized by trust are so highly valued that parties will want to commit themselves to such relationships (Hrebiniak, 1974). Trust is a major determinant of committed relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). That is, a trusted conference brand would evoke a higher degree of dispositional commitment to the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), thereby enhancing repeat attendance intention to the brand, ABL.

Hypothesis 10

Brand trust is positively associated with ABL.

Differential Effect of Brand Knowledge

As previously mentioned, Keller (1993) argued that customer-based brand equity is signified by the differential effect of brand knowledge comprising strong brand awareness with favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in consumer minds. This study assumed that I-CHRIE annual conference (IC) holds higher attendee-based brand equity than regional CHRIE conferences (RC) in the sense that IC is considered major conference to CHRIE and that IC generates more favorable brand knowledge due to stronger brand awareness with more favorable brand associations from IC. Specifically, IC celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2006, while APAC CHRIE and EURO CHRIE, major RCs, celebrated their 4th and 24th, respectively. IC has been providing a firm basis for RC to be founded and progress by displaying a showcase about educational programs, exhibit, social functions, and sponsorship programs. Most hospitality educators recognize the motherhood and superiority of IC to RC. Since this study captured the differential effect of brand knowledge through the mean scores of brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL, it hypothesized that attendees rate brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL for IC more favorably than ones for RC.

Hypothesis 11a

Brand satisfaction is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11b

UEBV is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11c

Brand trust is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11d

ABL is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

BBL as a Moderator

Another plausible explanation of the phenomenon that satisfaction does not always result in loyalty may be attributed in part to the incongruence of BBL with ABL. As a result, some researchers looked at the various moderating roles of loyalty. Garbarino and Johnson (1999) investigated different positions of satisfaction, trust, and commitment by dividing the behavioral loyal group into high and low behavioral loyal groups. Yi and La (2004) elaborated on the different effects of behavioral loyalty on attitudinal loyalty from the perspective of adjusted expectations. Their study shed light on different paths to repurchase intentions by high and low behavioral loyal customers although little is yet known about the details of the dynamic nature of loyalty.

Insert Table 2.2 About Here

Dick and Basu (1994) described well the interaction of attitudinal and behavioral loyalty by cross-classifying the concept of relative attitude with repeat patronage, proposing four different types of loyalty: (1) loyalty, (2) spurious loyalty, (3) latent loyalty, and (4) no loyalty (see Table 2.2).

Suppose that an attendee participates in only one conference. One plausible explanation for this loyalty is that the attendee appreciates the perceived quality and value of the conference; forms trust, reliance, and commitment toward the conference; and then decides to patronize the conference. This is called loyalty, and stems from the function of harmony between high relative attitude and repatronage (Dick & Basu, 1994) signified by Oliver's (1997) definition of loyalty, providing a competitive edge and differentiating one service provider from others.

Another possible explanation is that the attendee habitually participates in the conference because no alternative conference is available or because the attendee has low brand familiarity with other conferences. This is called spurious loyalty, reflected in a low relative attitude accompanied by high repeat patronage (Dick & Basu, 1994). Keller

(1998) also pointed out that brand loyalty is sometimes excluded from the conceptualization of brand equity because customers may habitually purchase a particular brand without really thinking much about why.

Conversely, commitment alone cannot establish loyalty, although it is indispensable to loyalty, because commitment just shows attitudinal loyalty, not behavioral loyalty. That is, commitment with low behavioral loyalty suggests latent loyalty, high relative attitude with low repeat patronage (Dick & Basu, 1994), whereby, for example, an attendee has a high relative attitude toward a conference but does not patronize the conference due to situational constraints, including several alternative conferences, schedule conflict, and a lack of financial support.

A low relative attitude pairing with low repeat patronage represents no loyalty. A service provider having no loyalty from customers should at least inspire them with spurious loyalty through the manipulation of social norms (e.g., interpersonal relationship) or situational experiences (e.g., promotions and brand familiarity) (Dick & Basu, 1994). Service providers should fully appreciate characteristics of both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty in their business context since neither loyalty alone can explain loyalty per se. Behavior and attitude should be put together to examine detailed properties of loyalty. Thus, this study employed BBL to investigate its moderating effect over the conceptual model.

Indirect Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust via UEBV

The indirect path lies in the proposition that the favorable expectation of brand value that is updated to satisfaction reinforces expectation about the confidence in brand (brand trust) through more (relational) benefits inferred from UEBV. Specifically, because high BBL attendees maintain more continued relationship with brand than low BBL attendees, high BBL attendees are likely to experience more cumulative satisfaction than low BBL attendees, thereby favorably updating the expectation of brand value perceived from cumulative satisfaction. According to Gwinner et al. (1998), as customers pursue long-term relationship with a provider, they receive more (relational) benefits and consequently perceive more value (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Selnes, 1995). High BBL attendees are thus more likely than low BBL to strengthen an expectation about the confidence in brand by appreciating more (relational) benefits, reflected from

UEBV of maintaining relationship with brand. In other words, relative to low BBL attendees, high BBL attendees form deeper brand trust through more favorable UEBV, as based on more cumulative satisfaction. Therefore, this study postulated that the indirect path is stronger for high BBL attendees than for low BBL attendees.

Hypothesis 12

Indirect path from brand satisfaction to brand trust via brand trust is stronger for high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Direct Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust

Trust is an overall or cumulative evaluation at some higher degree than satisfaction (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996), suggesting that cumulative consumption experiences evolve trust over time. This view is also reflected in “generalized expectancy” from the definition of trust in the sense that cumulative rather than episodic satisfaction should be required to settle down an expectation or belief about brand. Because BBL is operationalized as the proportion of the same brand choices, high BBL attendees are likely to experience more cumulative satisfaction than low BBL attendees. Thus, the brand satisfaction-brand trust path is posited to be stronger for high BBL attendees than for low BBL attendees.

Hypothesis 13

Direct path from brand satisfaction to brand trust is stronger for high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Brand Trust-ABL Path

This relationship construed from the effect of brand trust on ABL through brand commitment. As exchange partners learn to trust each other over time, commitment will be gradually established through cumulative experience (Dwyer et al., 1987) that is a central component in transforming brand trust into ABL. This logic implies that as high BBL attendees participate in a conference more often, high BBL attendees possess stronger trust and commitment than low BBL attendees, building up more ABL. This assertion is supported by Garbarino and Johnson’s (1999) study that high behavioral loyal customers (long-term theatergoers) at a performance theater base their future intentions on trust and commitment more than low behavioral loyal customers (individual ticket

buyers and occasional subscribers). Therefore, this study postulated that the path from brand trust to ABL is stronger for high BBL attendees than for low BBL attendees.

Hypothesis 14

Brand trust-ABL path is stronger for high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Figures and Tables

Figure 2.1 Dimensions of Brand Knowledge by Keller

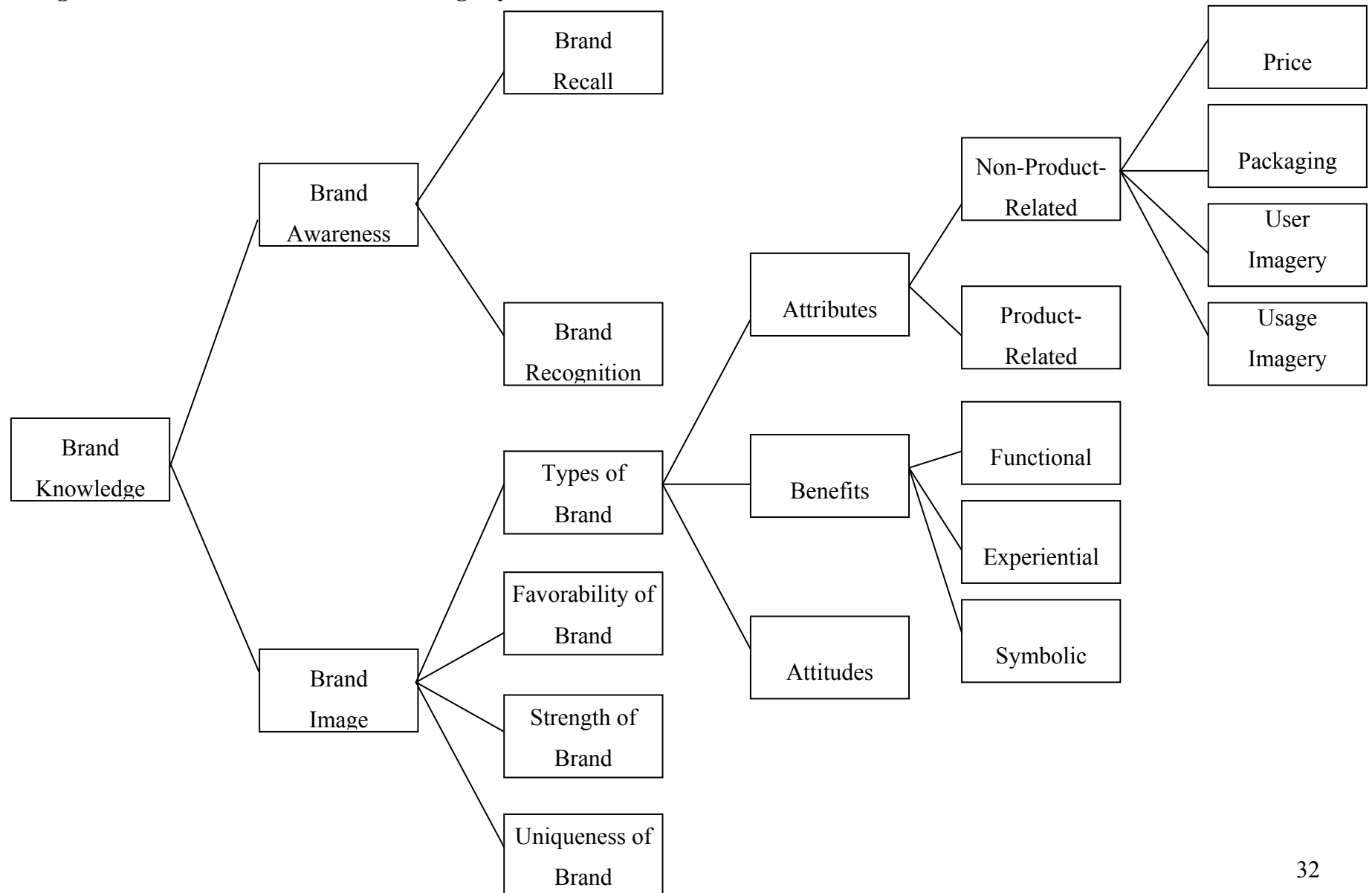
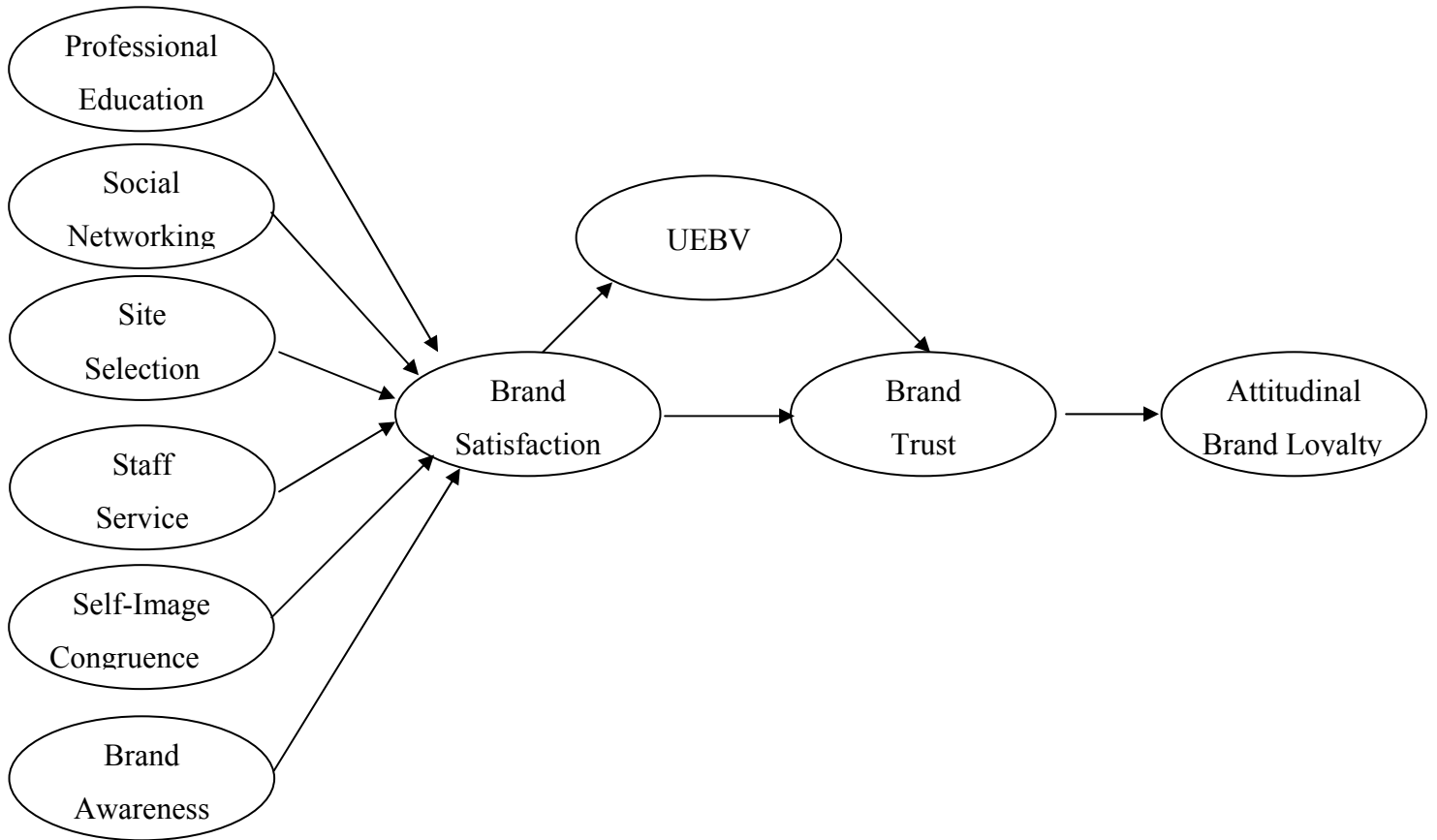


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Model of Attendee-Based Brand Equity



Note: Behavioral brand loyalty (BBL) serves as a moderator within brand trust-(UEBV)—ABL link.

UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value)

Table 2.1 Summary of Previous Studies on Brand Equity (Listed in Chronological Order)

Authors	Purpose	Findings	Methodology
Farquhar (1989)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on how to build strong brands with the consumer, how to sustain that brand equity over time, and how to expand and protect a business by leveraging brand equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong brand provides a platform for new products and licensing. Focus on a unique aspect of the brand that is easy for consumers to remember. Line extension and category extensions are ways of borrowing brand equity. Acquisition and licensing are ways of buying brand equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical review paper
Kamakura & Russell (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate the value assigned by consumers to each brand in a product category. Identify two major sources of brand equity by decomposing brand value into tangible and intangible components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand value measures perceived quality, the value assigned by consumers to the brand after discounting for current price and recent advertising exposures. Brand intangible value measures the value created by brand name associations and perceptual distortions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand, market share, price per ounce, total ad exposures, order of entry, ad spending
Keller (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a conceptual model of brand equity from the perspective of the individual consumer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand knowledge is conceptualized according to an associative network memory model in terms of brand awareness and a set of brand associations. Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical review paper

Authors	Purpose	Findings	Methodology
Simon & Sullivan (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a technique for estimating a firm's brand equity that is based on the financial market value of the firm. • Estimate brand equity using the macro approach for a sample of industries and companies. • Use the micro approach to trace the brand equity of Coca-Cola and Pepsi. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industries and companies with big brand names have high macro estimates of brand equity. • Micro estimates of changes in brand equity vary with marketing decisions and market conditions. • The estimate of brand equity could be improved using confidential company-level data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of market entry, brand's advertising expenditures relative to its competitors', firm's share of patents relative to competitors, and firm's share of R&D expenditures
Mahajan et al. (1994).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present a methodology to determine the importance of brand equity in acquisition decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By capturing the idiosyncratic perceived importance of brand equity of every decision maker involved in acquisition decisions, the methodology enables members of a committee within a firm to understand and reconcile their differences in evaluating potential acquisitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial variables: e.g., revenues, net income before taxes, etc. • Property management characteristics: e.g., ownership structure, # of properties, average suites/property, etc. • Market characteristics: e.g., brand loyalty, brand recognition, etc.
Park & Srinivasan (1994)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new survey-based method for measuring and understanding a brand's equity in a product category and evaluating the equity of the brand's extension into a different but related product category. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The method provides the market share premium and the price premium attributable to brand equity. • The survey-based method shows that the proposed approach has good reliability, convergent validity, and predictive validity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide brand equity into attribute and non-attribute-based component • Market share and price premium attributable to brand equity

Authors	Purpose	Findings	Methodology
Lassar et al. (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an instrument to measure customer-based brand equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The resulting scale was significantly correlated with an overall measure of brand equity. Prices reflected the equity associated with the brand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance, social image, value, trustworthiness, attachment
Pitta & Katsanis (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize concepts from both the brand extension and brand equity literature to yield managerial insights into the process underlying brand extension. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the core brand by distancing achieved by extending into a different product category. Function-oriented products allow downscale whereas prestige-oriented products allow upscale. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical review paper
Aaker (1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose Brand Equity Ten to create a set of brand equity measures that could be applied across markets and products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand equity measures are structured by the four dimensions of brand equity-loyalty, perceived quality, associations, and awareness. Brand equity measures influenced by brand asset valuator and EquiTrend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical review paper
Berry (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a service-branding model that underscores the salient role of customers' service experiences in brand information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four primary strategies that excellent service firms use to cultivate brand equity are discussed and illustrated. Branding is a principal success driver for service organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical review paper
Prasad & Dev (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a diagnostic and decision-making tool to CEOs and top managers of hotel companies that will help them maximize the value of their brands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotels with strong brand equity should command higher occupancy and rates, resulting in higher REVPAR. As more customers are satisfied and see a positive price-value relationship, higher earnings are generated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand performance: customer satisfaction, return intent, price-value relationship, preference Brand awareness

Authors	Purpose	Findings	Methodology
Yoo et al. (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the relationships between selected marketing mix elements and the creation of brand equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results show that frequent price promotions, such as price deals, are related to low brand equity, whereas high advertising spending, high price, good store image, and high distribution intensity are related to high brand equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Price, store image, distribution intensity, advertising spending, price deals, perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand associations with brand awareness, overall brand equity
Dillon et al. (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a decompositional model for analyzing brand ratings that addresses this nagging problem and provide insights for understanding the sources of brand equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relative influence of brand-specific associations and general brand impression depends on brand experience and positioning. The model provides a mechanism for assessing the strength and uniqueness of brand associations. Consumers who have had less direct brand-usage experience suggest that general brand impression will be more important in shaping brand extension ratings than brand-specific associations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand-specific associations: features, attributes, benefits General brand impression
Mackay (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test how measures of customer-based brand equity estimate brand equity in financial service market. Test construct validity of measures of customer-based brand equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most measures were convergent and correlated highly with market share in the predicted direction. Brand recall and familiarity were found to be the best estimators of brand equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall, familiarity, multi-attribute weighted score, value for money, quality of brand name, brand evaluation, community regard for each bank credit card, liking for each bank credit card, likelihood of switching, choice intention

Authors	Purpose	Findings	Methodology
Yoo & Donthu (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a scale to measure customer-based brand equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multistep psychometric tests demonstrate that the new brand equity scale is reliable, valid, parsimonious, and generalizable across several cultures and product categories. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand awareness with associations
Kim et al. (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examines the underlying dimensions of brand equity and how they affect financial performance of hotel firms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotels seriously consider brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand image when attempting to establish definite brand equity from the customers' viewpoint. Measures comprising brand loyalty, brand awareness, and brand image show that most measures affect financial performance of hotels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand image, brand awareness
Kim & Kim (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the relationship between brand equity and firm's performance in a fastfood restaurant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand awareness had the strongest direct effect on revenues while loyalty had the least effect. Customers differentiated the high-performing restaurants on several product-quality measures, including knowledgeable employees and food served on time and as ordered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand loyalty, perceived quality, brand image, brand awareness

Table 2.2 Dick and Basu's (1994) Relative Attitude-Behavior

		Repeat Patronage	
		High	Low
Relative Attitude	High	Loyalty	Latent Loyalty
	Low	Spurious Loyalty	No Loyalty

CHAPTER 3 - Research Methodology

This chapter contains a description of the research design in this study (see Figure 3.1). The first section summarizes the development and refinement of measurement scales. The second section presents the description of sample selection and data collection. The third section delineates data analysis, including an independent samples T test and measurement and structural invariance testing across the I-CHRIE annual conference and regional CHRIE conference and high and low BBL groups, respectively.

Development of Measurement Scales

After an extensive literature review, the instrument included questions for measuring all of the constructs in the theoretical model. The final version of the instrument was elicited through a pilot test designed to enhance construct reliability and validity. Most items were measured on 7-point Likert-type scales, with anchors of 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

As shown in the Appendix A.2 and B.2, the survey instrument had five parts. The first part contained questions about conference awareness and benefits (professional education and social networking) of attending a conference. The second part included questions about the evaluation of a conference (site selection, staff service, brand satisfaction, brand trust, UEBV, and ABL). The third part reflected self-image congruence. The fourth part measured BBL through open-ended questions. However, BBL measurements were not included in the instrument for regional CHRIE conferences. This was because regional CHRIE conferences are comprised of several different regional CHRIE conferences, making it impossible to assess BBL. The last section obtained respondent demographics, including gender, education, and occupation.

Insert Figure 3.1 About Here

Measurement Scales

Multi-measurement items for each construct were used to complement the limitations of single item. According to Churchill (1979), a single item normally (1) is too specific to capture the considerable attributes of a construct, (2) is likely to break people down into too few groups, and (3) tends to have high measurement errors. With multi-measurement scales, however, researchers average out specificity, make fine distinctions among people, increase reliability, and decrease measurement errors.

Building on convention and marketing literature (Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993; Um & Crompton, 1992), each brand association had three- to four-item scales: (1) a three-item scale for measuring professional education (e.g., The quality/reputation of keynote speakers at the I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference favorably influenced my decision to attend the conference.); (2) a three-item scale for social networking (e.g., Attending the I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference bolstered my social networking.); (3) a four-item scale for site selection (e.g., The I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference sites favorably influenced my decision to attend the conference.); (4) a three-item scale for staff service (e.g., The I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference staff members had a good service attitude.); and (5) a four-item scale for self-image congruence (e.g., The typical attendees at the I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference have similar image to how I perceive myself.).

The item scales for the remaining constructs were established based on a review of consumer behavior and marketing literature. Brand awareness was measured with a two-item scale developed from studies by Keller (1993) and Yoo et al. (2001)—some characteristics of the I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference come to my mind quickly. Overall satisfaction (Oliver, 1997) reflected brand satisfaction and was assessed using a three-item scale (e.g., Overall, I am satisfied with the I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference.). Consistent with relationship marketing, brand trust was adopted from the empirical study of Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002), using a three-item scale (e.g., I rely on the I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference.). Devised from expectation mechanism (Olive, 1997; Yi & La, 2004), UEBV was captured with a three-item scale (e.g., Having experienced at the previous I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference, I expect future I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference to be worth the money.). Building on Oliver's (1997)

loyalty concept, a three-item scale assessed ABL (e.g., I will continue to attend the I-CHRIE/regional CHRIE conference.). Finally, two short answer questions captured BBL (e.g., How many times have you attended the I-CHRIE conference in the last 5 years?).

Institutional Review Board Approval

In accordance with the requirements of the KSU **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**, the **investigator** completed the training and education modules designed for the study involving human subjects and then obtained IRB's approval of the study before the pilot test.

Pilot Test

A pilot test was used to filter the initial survey instrument through investigation of measurement errors, reliability, and construct validity (convergent and discriminant validity). The pilot test was administered to attendees of the GNSS Technology Council (GTC) annual conference. The response rate was 17% (75 out of 435). Based on data from pilot test, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. Due to the poor goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2 = 779.7$ $df=482$, RMSEA = 0.95, CFI = 0.86, NFI = 0.84), the measurement model failed to be parsimonious. This study thus conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to check underlying dimensions. As a result of EFA, one measurement for social networking and two measurements for site selection belonged to other dimensions. CFA was run again after deleting three measurement items, showing satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2 = 634.1$, $df=389$, RMSEA=0.07, CFI=0.93, NFI=0.97). Moreover, as indicated in Table 3.1, the reliability and validity of measurement model was supported; all of the Cronbach's alphas exceeded 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978) and all of the AVEs were greater than 0.5 as well as squared correlation coefficients for corresponding inter-constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, the pilot test ensured the reliability and validity of survey instrument, thereby leading to a final version of the survey instrument.

Insert Table 3.1 About Here

Data Collection Procedure

Sample Selection

To disclose the differential effect of brand knowledge in a detailed manner, this study sampled I-CHRIE members attending I-CHRIE annual conference or regional CHRIE conferences. Since the study was based on past experiences of the conferences, members who have not attended the I-CHRIE annual conference or regional CHRIE conferences were excluded. According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), a sample size of 150 or more is sufficient to gain parameter estimates with small standard errors and provide a converged and proper solution for models. To ensure standard errors small enough to be of practical use, the study targeted a sample size of at least 200 for each conference.

Data Collection

The survey instrument was administered to the target sample via K-State Online survey system. Most members' email addresses were available from the target association directory, so an online survey would be much faster and more economical than the traditional mail survey. A lower response rate was expected from the survey of attendees of the regional CHRIE conferences due to the fact that fewer members attended regional conferences as compared to the I-CHRIE annual conference. To enhance the response rate, respondents to the regional conferences were offered an incentive: "Your participation in the survey will generate a \$2 donation to one of the following charity organizations (Children International, Christian Children's Fund, UNICEF, World Vision) of your choice to help starving children across the world." Data collection for this study attained a response rate of 20.1% (213 out of 1,036) for the I-CHRIE conference and 19.4% (201 out of 1,036) for regional CHRIE conferences.

Data Analysis

Structural equation modeling has been frequently used in psychology and social sciences because it enables researchers to assess and modify theoretical models (Bentler, 1983; Browne, 1984). According to Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, this study checked the measurement and structural model using SPSS for Windows 12.0 and AMOS 4. However, because this study was based on two samples (I-CHRIE vs. regional CHRIE conferences and high vs. low BBL attendees), and not a single sample, the major concern was whether or not the proposed measurement and structural models are invariant across two samples (Byrne, 1998). In line with the procedures recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1989), Byrne (1998), Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), Yi and La (2004), and Yoo (2002), measurement and structural invariance tests were conducted to examine proposed measurement and structural models (see Figure 3.2).

Reliability and Construct Validity Check

Measurement model testing indicates how well the observed indicators reflect the constructs (Jöreskog, Sörbom, & Jöreskog, 1998). The reliability and validity of the measurement model is necessary to secure the fit of the measurement model to the data. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 serves as the cut-off point for assessing reliability for multi-item scales (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Nunnally, 1978).

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also used to assess convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 1998). When all the AVE exceed 0.5, convergent validity is satisfied. Moreover, when an AVE for each construct is greater than squared correlation coefficients for corresponding inter-constructs, discriminant validity is confirmed (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Insert Figure 3.2 About Here

Measurement Invariance Testing: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A measurement invariance test that was simultaneously run across two groups in CFA was used to assess whether a measurement model is equivalent across two groups. Measurement invariance represents “whether or not, under different conditions of observing and studying phenomena, measurement operations yield measures of the same attribute” (Horn & McArdle, 1992, p. 117). If there is a lack of evidence supporting measurement invariance, findings based on that measurement are at best uncertain and at worst mistaken (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998).

The general procedure of testing measurement invariance across two groups is to identify the chi-square difference between nonrestricted measurement model and full metric invariance model (invariance of factor loadings across two groups). If the chi-square difference test does not reveal a significant difference between two models, full metric invariance is supported, indicating that the measurement model is invariant across two groups (Yoo, 2002). Conversely, the induced meanings of factors would differ substantially across two groups when chi-square difference is significant. If full metric invariance is not supported, this study would adopt partial metric invariance model established by releasing an invariant factor loading at a time on the basis of modification indices and expected parameter changes (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998; Yoo, 2002).

When full metric invariance is supported, full metric invariance model is used as a baseline model to test structural invariance across two groups. This is because factor loadings were found invariant across two groups (Yi & La, 2004; Yoo, 2002) and full metric invariance model minimizes the effect of possible variation across two groups in measurement structures (Bagozzi & Yi, 1989). However, if evidence for full metric invariance lacks, partial metric invariance serves as a baseline model to test structural invariance across two groups (Yi & La, 2004). Moreover, according to overall goodness-of-fit indices (e.g., χ^2 , RMSEA <0.08, CFI >0.90, NFI >0.90) from CFA, a measurement model was tested across two groups to see if it is parsimonious.

Insert Table 3.2 About Here

Structural Invariance Testing

The structural invariance test measures whether a proposed structural model is equivalent across two groups. The procedure of structural invariance test is similar to the one used for measurement invariance test. First, the chi-square difference test should be conducted between a baseline model (full metric invariance of structural model in this study) and full path invariance of structural model (invariance of paths across two groups). Second, if the baseline and constrained models are not significantly different, it is concluded that the structural model is invariant across two groups (Byrne, 1998). However, when the baseline and constrained models are significantly different, it is assumed that the structural model is different across two groups, suggesting moderating effect on causal relationships in the model (Yoo, 2002). Finally, if evidence supports moderating effect, chi-square difference tests would be conducted to test whether the differences in parameter estimates (paths) are statistically significant (Bagozzi & Yi, 1989; Yi & La, 2004).

For testing hypotheses 1–10, this study did not follow the whole procedure of structural invariance testing. A baseline model was just run across the I-CHRIE conference and regional CHRIE conferences because identifying path relationships, not structural invariance, is essential to test hypotheses 1–10. On the other hand, the full steps of structural invariance testing were followed to test hypotheses 12–14 designed to check moderating effect of BBL. Also, according to overall goodness-of-fit indices (e.g., χ^2 , RMSEA <0.08, CFI >0.90, NFI >0.90) from SEM, a structural model was tested to see if it is parsimonious.

Insert Table 3.3 About Here

Independent Samples T Tests

In order to test hypothesis 11, which was designed to capture the differential effect of brand knowledge by comparing the mean scores for brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL across I-CHRIE difference and regional CHRIE conferences, this

study conducted independent samples T-tests to identify statistically significant mean difference.

Figures and Tables

Figure 3.1 Procedure for Research Design

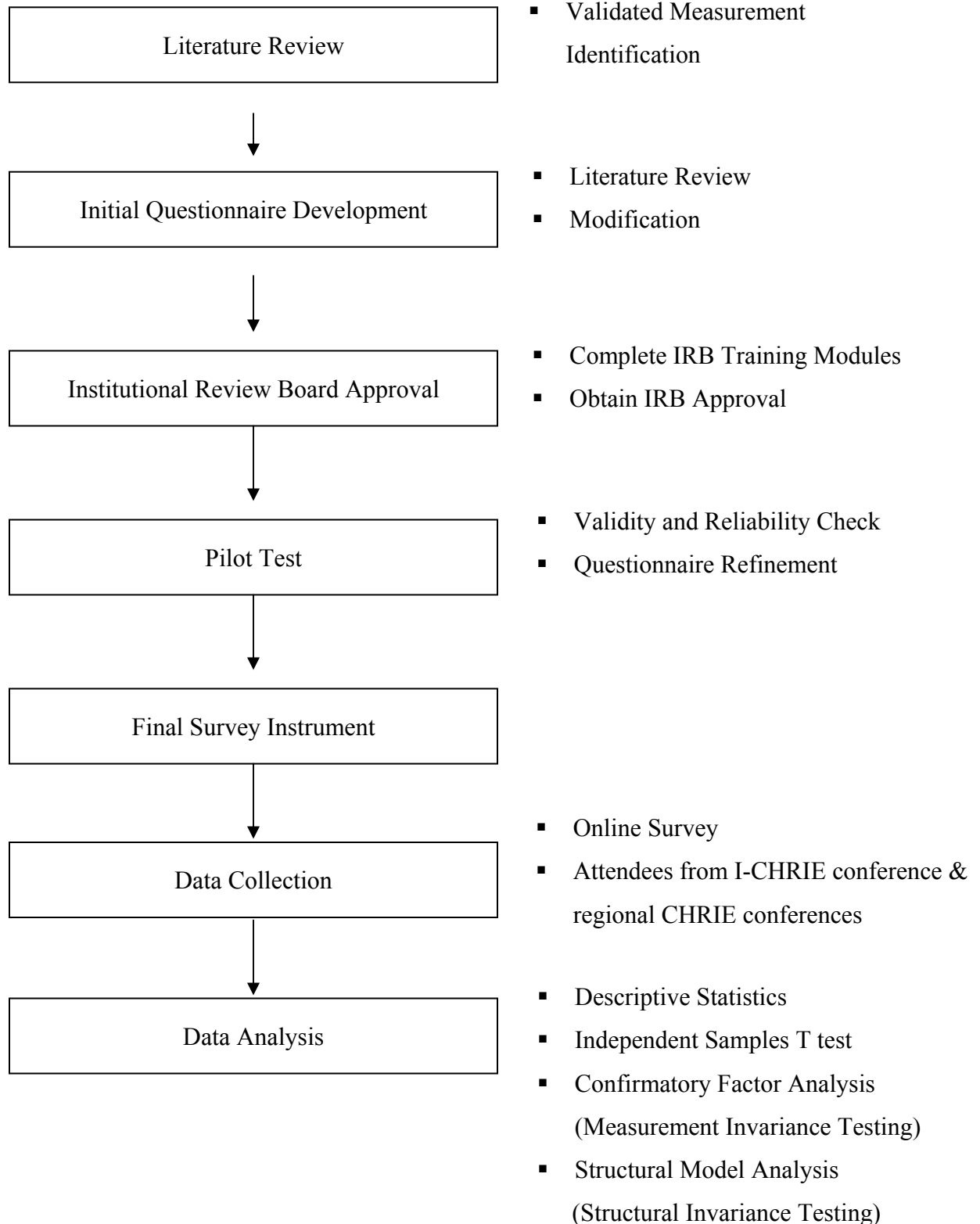


Figure 3.2 Procedure for Data Analysis

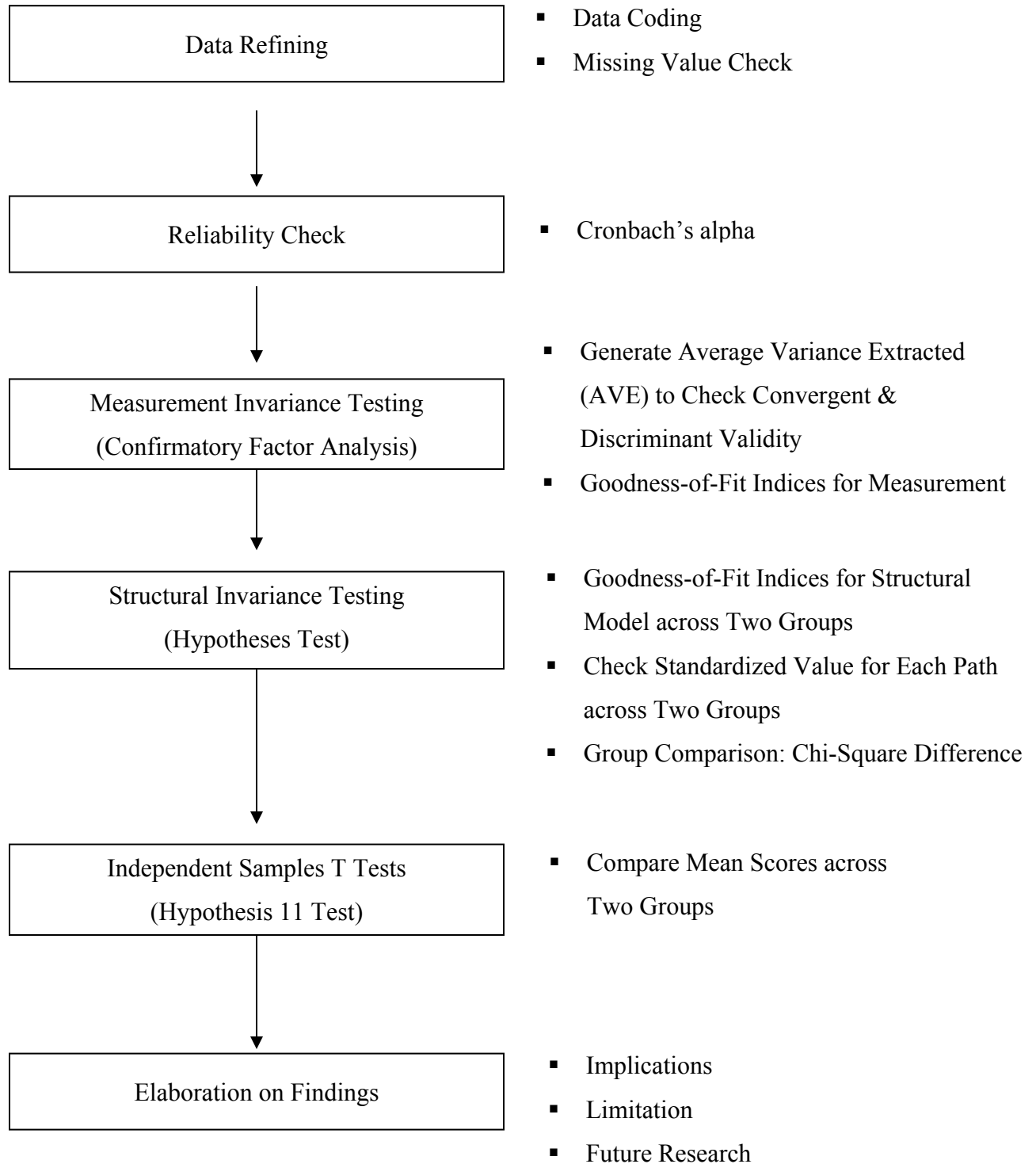


Table 3.1 Correlations (squared correlation), Reliability, AVE, and Mean

	PE	SN	SS	SVC	SI	BA	BS	BTR	UEBV	ABL
PE	1.00									
SN	.58(.34)	1.00								
SS	.38(.14)	.49(.24)	1.00							
SVC	.56(.31)	.43(.18)	.54(.29)	1.00						
SI	.54(.29)	.55(.30)	.35(.12)	.45(.20)	1.00					
BA	.32(.10)	.65(.42)	.37(.14)	.27(.07)	.29(.08)	1.00				
BS	.70(.49)	.60(.36)	.53(.28)	.65(.42)	.50(.25)	.25(.06)	1.00			
BTR	.70(.49)	.53(.28)	.52(.27)	.63(.40)	.46(.21)	.25(.06)	.88(.77)	1.00		
UEBV	.61(.37)	.46(.21)	.45(.20)	.54(.29)	.40(.16)	.21(.04)	.76(.58)	.86(.74)	1.00	
ABL	.53(.28)	.40(.16)	.39(.15)	.47(.22)	.35(.12)	.19(.04)	.67(.45)	.75(.56)	.65(.42)	11.00
Reliability	.85	.78	.73	.96	.97	.79	.95	.92	.92	.93
AVE	.66	.57	.50	.89	.94	.66	.87	.80	.79	.81
Mean	4.23	5.31	5.02	5.07	4.72	6.36	5.06	4.61	4.68	4.90
Std. Dev.	1.40	1.23	1.05	1.45	1.33	1.12	1.41	1.48	1.52	1.53

Note: PE (Professional Education), SN (Social Networking), SS (Site Selection), SVC (Staff Service)

SI (Self-Image Congruence), BA (Brand Awareness), BS (Brand Satisfaction), BTR (Brand Trust)

UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value), ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty).

All are significant at .01.

Table 3.2 Testing for Measurement Invariance Across Groups

Models	Description
Nonrestricted Measurement Model	Freely Estimated
Full Metric Invariance Model	($L(X)Y=IN$) If supported, it is used as a baseline model to test structural invariance across two groups.
Partial Metric Invariance Model	If full metric invariance model is not supported, partial metric invariance model serves as a baseline model to test structural invariance across two groups.

Note: IN (Invariance)

Table 3.3 Testing for Structural Invariance Across Groups

Models	Description
Full or Partial Metric Invariance Model	Used as a baseline model
Full Path Invariance Model (L(X)Y=IN, GA=IN, BE=IN)	Chi-square difference between a baseline and full path invariance models. If significant, moderating effect exists.
Chi-Square Difference Tests for Paths	Conducted to see if the difference between two paths is significant.

Note: IN (Invariance)

CHAPTER 4 - References

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CHAPTER 5 - The Effect of Conference Brand Knowledge on Attendee Behaviors

Abstract

In designing the marketing and management of association meetings, associations are increasingly concerned with attendee behaviors. Using a professional association's major and regional conferences, this study investigated attendee behaviors from the perspective of brand knowledge. According to simultaneous structural equation analyses across two samples, professional education, staff service, site selection, and social networking were positively related to brand satisfaction, whereas brand awareness was negatively associated with it. Positive relationships existed on each path for brand satisfaction-UEBV (updated expectation of brand value), UEBV-brand trust, brand satisfaction-brand trust, and brand trust-attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL). UEBV served as a partial mediator on the brand satisfaction-brand trust path, and the differential effect of brand knowledge between two samples was disclosed. The findings suggested significant implications for practitioners and academics.

Keywords: attendee-based brand equity; brand association; brand knowledge; brand trust; updated expectation of brand value (UEBV); attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL)

Introduction

Annual meetings of associations are highly profitable to the hospitality and tourism industry because of the large number of delegates they bring to conference destinations. Association meetings represent the most important segment of the convention industry, accounting for 71% of direct expenditures in the convention industry (Alkjaer, 1993), 78% of all attendees, and 80% of all conventions and meetings (Edelstein & Benini, 1994). Recently, more attention has gone into managing and marketing association meetings because of (1) the growing number of associations competing for attendees (Loverseed, 1993); (2) the high proportion of association

revenue derived from annual meetings (about 30.2% of their annual income) (Shure, 2004); (3) the increasing conference expenses borne by association members (Oppermann & Chon, 1997); and (4) participant decision-making as influenced by the perception of meeting destination and participant needs and finances (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). In hospitality and tourism research, interest has been therefore growing in association meeting attendee behaviors or attendee information processing which can help in designing competitive conference marketing and management strategies.

From the perspective of attendee behaviors, existing convention literature largely focuses on the site selection process (Go & Govers, 1999; Hu & Hiemstra, 1996) and the meeting participation process (Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993; Um & Crompton, 1992). These studies identified criteria and factors of site selection and conceptualized the meeting participation process by examining motivators, facilitators, and inhibitors to convention attendance, which have contributed to managerial and research implications in the convention industry. However, relative to hospitality and tourism literature, convention lags far behind in in-depth research. A more detailed and diverse approach should be used to analyze attendee behaviors.

A conference is not a tangible product that attendees can pretest or touch. Just like service products, attending conferences involves high perceived risks arising out of intangible attributes (e.g., education and social networking). Such characteristics make it difficult for a conference organizer to deliver a clear picture of the service and to lower the perceived risk. A key to success in service marketing is to "tangibilize the intangible" (Berry, 1986, p. 6). An effective way of increasing the tangible nature of a service is to use a brand as an extrinsic cue or an icon. As such, the brand becomes a symbol for customer perceptions of the firm, its products, and its services (Keller, 1998) and a powerful means of creating and sustaining competitive advantage (Aaker, 1997; Aggarwal, 2004; Fournier, 1998). It is widely recognized that well-branded tradeshow, conferences, or other meetings will develop trust in participants and, thus, ensure committed repeat attendance (PCMA, 2002).

Brand equity has been used as a barometer of brand strength through its logo, symbol, or name (Farquhar, 1989; Morgan, 2000). Strong brands contribute to enhancing consumer trust of the intangible purchase, tangibilizing the intangible goods, and reducing

the perceived risk for the service purchase by assisting customers in visualizing and understanding the intangible aspects of the service product (Berry, 2000). Cultivating strong brands with high equity improves (1) the probability of brand choice, (2) brand performance, (3) cash flow, (4) willingness to pay premium, (5) marketing productivity, (6) product positioning, and (7) brand knowledge in consumers' minds (Keller, 1993; Simon & Sullivan, 1993). A conference with high brand equity would be assumed, therefore, to enhance marketing activities and brand loyalty, thereby maintaining high revenues and competitive positioning in the meeting market.

Despite the well-recognized significance of the brand equity concept in business and service literature, no study has been published in the convention literature to examine conference brand equity. Several hospitality researchers conducted brand equity research in the hotel and restaurant industry. Kim and Kim (2004) investigated brand equity of fast food restaurants using four dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image, and perceived quality. Prasad and Dev (2000) examined what constitutes brand equity in the hotel industry through brand awareness and a brand performance index. Brand equity research provides a more detailed and comprehensive picture of consumer behavior because it spans various brand factors, including brand awareness, brand associations, brand image, brand trust, brand personality, and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Berry, 2000; Keller, 1993; Farquhar, 1989; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

Conference brand equity from the perspective of attendees is therefore expected to capture a richer and more detailed portrait of attendee consumption experiences and paths to future intentions than the extant literature, thereby making a theoretical and empirical contribution to the understanding of constructs that explain attendee behaviors and practices within the attendee-brand relationship. There are three objectives of this study based on customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993). The first is to identify key brand associations in brand knowledge. The second is to investigate attendees' behaviors through the flow from brand knowledge (brand associations and brand awareness) to the differential effect of brand knowledge. This is captured by comparing a professional association's major and regional conference to each other in terms of mean scores of brand satisfaction, updated expectation of brand value (UEBV), brand trust, and attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL), especially the mediating effect of UEBV on brand

satisfaction-brand trust link. The final objective is to provide in-depth research about and managerial implications of conference attendees' behaviors from which sound conference management and marketing approached might be suggested.

Literature Review

Definition of Brand Equity

Several researchers provide subtly different forms and definitions of brand equity. Brand equity is described as (1) "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (Aaker, 1991, p. 15); (2) "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993, p. 8); and (3) the power that a brand may command in a market by means of its name, symbol, or logo (Farquhar, 1989). Consistent with the purpose of study, this study builds on Keller's (1993) definition of customer-based brand equity.

Theoretical Model

Keller (1993) delineated customer-based brand equity in a detailed manner, conceptualizing it as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (p. 8). Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is aware of the brand with some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in the memory. The core concept of his model draws on "brand knowledge" composed of two dimensions: brand awareness and brand associations.

Keller suggested that the brand knowledge affects customer perceptions, preference, behavior, and brand choice toward marketing mix, as implied by "differential effect of brand knowledge." Drawing on customer-based brand equity by Keller, this study conceptualized the theoretical model as depicted in Figure 5.1 to capture attendee-based brand equity through "the differential effect of brand knowledge" manifested by brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and attitudinal brand loyalty, most of which are frequently used in the marketing literature to measure customer response to brand marketing. Thus, this study sampled I-CHRIE's annual conference and regional CHRIE conferences and compared them to each other within the mean scores of brand

satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL. This would disclose the differential effect of brand knowledge by identifying which meeting has a higher mean score in terms of brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL. UEBV and brand trust are adopted from the viewpoint of relationship marketing and expectation mechanism that would presume the mediating effect of UEBV on brand satisfaction-brand trust path, which awaits theoretical and empirical validation. Further elaboration on the model is presented as explications of constructs.

Insert Figure 5.1 About Here

Explications of Constructs and Hypotheses

Brand Knowledge-Brand Satisfaction Path

Consumer brand knowledge relates to the cognitive representation of the brand (Peter & Olson, 2001). Consumer brand knowledge can be defined by the personal meaning of a brand stored in consumer memory, that is, all descriptive and evaluative brand associations and brand awareness (Keller, 2003). Brand knowledge contributes to enhancing marketing efficiency in that the knowledge that has been inextricably intertwined with the brand in a customer's mind significantly influences the consumer information process of a brand (Keller, 1993). Brand knowledge consisting of strong brand awareness with positive (favorable, strong, and unique) brand associations favorably affects customer perceptions, preferences, and behaviors toward marketing mix and consequently toward overall brand attitude (Keller, 1993). This indicates that brand satisfaction is highly distinguished by positive brand knowledge composed of strong brand awareness with positive brand associations.

Satisfaction has been defined in several ways. It is largely conceptualized as (1) "the consumer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and actual performance of the product as perceived after its consumption" (Tse & Wilton, 1988, p. 204); (2) "an emotional response to the experiences provided by,

associated with particular products or services purchased, retail outlets, or even molar patterns of behavior such as shopping and buyer behavior, as well as the overall market place” (Westbrook & Reilly, 1983, p. 256); and (3) “the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer’s prior feelings about the consumption experience” (Oliver, 1981, p. 27). These definitions reflect overall positive affect and a focal buyer’s overall contentment regarding the relationship with an exchange party.

This study used the definition of overall (cumulative) satisfaction: “an overall evaluation based on the total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time” (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994, p. 54). Overall satisfaction is characterized by a cumulative construct that has been evaluated by expectations and perceived performance as well as past satisfaction (Johnson, Anderson, & Fornell, 1995). Applied market research is more inclined to base customer satisfaction on the overall level of satisfaction with various facets of a company than episode-specific satisfaction, (Czepiel, Rosenberg, & Akerele, 1974). Brand satisfaction in this study was operationalized as overall satisfaction with a brand based on previous attendance experiences. Building on Keller’s (1993) model, this study examined conference brand knowledge through brand awareness and associations that are based on the past experiences of conference attendance and postulated that strong brand awareness and favorable brand associations positively affect brand satisfaction.

Brand Associations-Brand Satisfaction Path

Aaker (1991, p. 109) contended that brand associations are defined as “anything linked in memory to a brand,” which is consistent with Keller’s (1993) line of reasoning that brand associations are other informational nodes linked to the brand node stored in consumer memory. Moreover, Keller pointed out that the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of brand associations are the dimensions discriminating brand knowledge that play a key role in underlying the differential response to the marketing of the brand, especially in high involvement decision settings. That is, the brand equity is supported on a large scale by the associations that consumers attach to a brand.

Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) categorized brand associations into several types; the common types of brand associations are (1) attributes, (2) customer benefits, (3)

usage and user imagery, (4) personality, (5) celebrity/endorser of product/service, and (6) geographic area. Attributes and customer benefits are deeply embedded in brand associations in that they characterize the product/service and provide a reason to buy the brand (Aaker, 1991). Each attribute pairs with the corresponding benefit since it supplies the benefit (Aaker, 1991). Usage and user imagery can be developed from consumer exposure to advertising, contact with brand users, and experience with the brand (Keller, 1993). In usage and user imagery, consumers express life-styles, social positions, and themselves through products (Aaker, 1991), which, in turn, arouses brand personality: brand characterized by personality descriptors such as “young,” “tough,” and “glamorous” (Aaker, 1997). Also, Keller (1993) classified celebrity/endorser (e.g., Tiger Woods with Nike) of product/service and geographic area (e.g., Swiss watches) as secondary brand associations that occur when the brand node is linked to other information not directly related to the product/service in consumer memory. In the context of the conference, this study adopts attributes, customer benefits, self-image congruence, and geographic area, each of which is elaborated.

This study measured perceived quality of a conference to reflect its attributes and corresponding benefits. The perceived quality relates to four brand associations: professional education, social networking, staff service, and site selection (geographic area). Professional education, social networking, and site selection, especially, have been considered important constructs in the convention literature (Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993) because they significantly affect the conference participation decision-making process.

Attendees want to keep up with new trends in their areas or to be present at a keynote session by a famous speaker. Professional education is a major benefit of attending conferences and thus motivates people to attend conferences (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993). Professional education can be construed from achievement motivation. According to Butler (1999), people's achievement goals affect their achievement-related attitudes that include task-involvement. Task-involvement is a motivational state in which a person's main goal is to acquire skills and understanding because of self-satisfaction (Butler, 1999). To increase satisfaction with a conference, the

educational programs most association meetings offer should be designed to satisfy attendees' achievement motivation.

H1: Professional education is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Attendees believe that a conference provides an opportunity for them to develop new business and professional relationships. According to Madsen (2003), social networking occurs when someone invites you to engage in relations, and a significant key competence in relationships is negotiation of personal meaning. Those who fail to establish this code of interaction may feel isolated and excluded, thereby reducing satisfaction (Brown, 2001). Expanding relationships with other colleagues or professionals thus serves to motivate participation in a conference (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993) and contributes to the satisfaction with the conference in that it provides attendees with informal, beneficial information on industry trends, job opportunities, and business events (Price, 1993).

H2: Social networking is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Geographic area can be interpreted as site selection in the context of conferences; conferences are held in geographic areas. Site selection has been a key in conference management and marketing (Go & Govers, 1999) in that it determines the attendance level and thus the success of the meeting. Site selection has been influenced by traveling costs, accessibility, safety/security, climate, and extra conference opportunities (e.g., shopping and sightseeing) that meeting planners consider in selecting a destination (Oppermann, 1996). Therefore, such attributes associated with a conference destination can serve as an extrinsic cue that prospective attendees use as a basis for deciding to participate. Positive experiences with the conference venue contribute to overall satisfaction with the conference.

H3: Site selection is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Service quality has been widely known to comprise five dimensions (reliability, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles) (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) and treated as attitude (Bitner, 1990). La Tour and Peat (1979) pointed out that whereas attitude is preconsumption construct, satisfaction is post experience construct. This supports that service quality is an antecedent to satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988). Cronin and Taylor initially hypothesized that satisfaction affects service

quality. However, findings from multi-industry sample showed the reverse relationship. Such a relationship was further confirmed by Spreng and Mackooy (1996), who tested the revised version of model established by Oliver (1993) and by Deruyter, Bloemer, and Peeters (1997), who examined the relationship in the health care setting. In this study, staff service was closely related to all of the service quality dimensions but tangibles and hence significantly contributes to the formation of service attitude, resulting in increased attendee satisfaction with the conference.

H4: Staff service is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

User imagery is defined as “the set of human characteristics (traits) associated with the typical user of a brand” (Aaker, 1997, p. 348). Self-image congruence is defined as the congruence between product/brand user image and self-image construed from multiple self-concepts (Sirgy, Grewal, Mangleburg, Park, Chon, Claiborne, Johar, & Berkman, 1997). According to Sirgy (1982), a multidimensional self-image is composed of (1) actual self-image—how an individual in fact sees him/herself; (2) ideal self-image—how an individual would like to see him/herself; (3) social self-image—how an individual feels others see him/herself; and (4) ideal social-self image—how an individual would like others to see him/herself.

This study adopted self-image congruence rather than user imagery for the following reasons. First, self-image congruence is a broader and more powerful brand association encompassing user imagery by looking at both user image and multiple self-images. Self-image congruence strengthens the brand associated with a particular user image by identifying the user image congruent with target consumers’ self images (Sirgy et al., 1997). Second, considering social networking with other attendees motivates meeting participation, it is noteworthy to examine which dimension in self-image would be the most congruent with the generalized image of conference attendees. This would provide precious implications in (re)positioning a conference in target attendees’ self-images. Finally, relative to self-image congruence, user imagery is not enough to predict consumer behavior until it significantly affects brand personality that predicts trust and loyalty (Fournier, 1994). Self-image congruence, however, has been used to predict satisfaction in a tourist destination (Chon, 1990), a restaurant (Wang, 1990), and a hotel (Back, 2005) as well as brand use, brand attitude, and purchase motivation in the

marketing literature (Sirgy et al., 1997) because of the correspondence arising from a psychological comparison between product/brand user image and the consumer's multiple self-concepts (Sirgy et al., 1997).

Self-image congruence is an important predictor of satisfaction. Back (2005) found out that self-image congruence significantly affects customer satisfaction in the lodging industry, suggesting that hotel guests enhance their satisfaction when perceiving high level of image congruence. In the jewelry market setting, Jamal and Goode (2001) empirically investigated the effects of image congruence on customer satisfaction. Their findings indicated that customers with higher levels of image congruence were more likely to be satisfied with the brand as compared to those with lower levels of image congruence. Self-image congruence-brand satisfaction relationship can be construed from a need for social approval and consistency (Sirgy et al., 1997). Specifically, to obtain social approval, people would be likely to behave in ways congruent with how significant others perceive them. Also, due to the need for social consistency, they would tend to be consistent with how others perceive them. That is, high self-image congruence meets the need for social approval and consistency, thereby leading to satisfaction (Back, 2005). Accordingly, low gap between self-image and the image of generalized conference attendees would induce satisfaction with the conference by sustaining attendees' social approval and consistency. That is, high self-image congruence can favorably influence overall evaluation of consumption experience with brand.

H5: Self-image congruence is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Brand Awareness-Brand Satisfaction Path

Brand awareness is "the ability for a buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (Aaker, 1991, p. 61). Similarly, Keller (1993) postulated that brand awareness consists of recognition and recall performance for brand. Specifically, brand recognition refers to the consumer ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand using a given brand as a cue, and brand recall represents the consumer ability to retrieve the brand in a given product category (Keller, 1993).

Pitta and Katsanis (1995) pointed out that the most important aspect of brand awareness is forming a brand node in the memory in the first place. A brand awareness memory node is necessary before any brand associations can be formed. Without an

established brand node in the memory, building a brand association is impossible. Brand awareness is therefore related to the strength of the brand node as reflected by consumers' ability to identify the brand under different conditions (Rossiter & Percy, 1987) and increases the likelihood of the brand being selected as consideration set at the point of purchase (Yoo et al., 2000).

Generally, strong brand awareness favorably contributes to a service provider. Kim, Kim, and An (2003) and Kim and Kim (2004) conducted research on a hotel and on fast food restaurants, respectively. Their findings showed that brand awareness is positively related to hotel financial performance and brand equity of the restaurants. This indirectly implies that strong brand recall and recognition are desirable strategic outcomes of marketing efforts (Robertson, 1987) and positively affect overall evaluation of consumption experience with brand by rapidly recalling brand benefits.

H6: Brand awareness is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Direct Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust

Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande (1992, p. 315) defined trust as “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence.” Another definition of trust is that it is a “generalized expectancy” of how an exchange partner will perform in the future (Moorman et al., 1992). These definitions imply that trusted service providers are dependable and relied on with a “generalized expectancy” of delivering what they promise. In consonance with these definitions, this study refers to brand trust as the confidence of average attendees in the reliability and integrity of the brand with a firm expectation that the brand will perform its stated function.

The process by which consumers attribute a trust to the brand is founded on their postconsumption experiences with a brand. Keller (1993) and Krishnan (1996) claimed that trust is affected by various encounters (e.g., advertising, usage, satisfaction) with the brand. When attendees are satisfied with a particular conference, they shape the confidence that the conference will deliver what is promised and see much less perceived risk associated with the conference than with unfamiliar conferences. Transforming brand satisfaction into brand trust, however, requires repeatedly positive consumption experiences because a committed relationship between buyer and seller develops over time as they learn each other (Dywer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). That is, the overall

postconsumption experience has more effect on trust than other episodic contacts with the brand because it creates feelings that are more self-relevant and associated with certainty (Dywer et al., 1987; Krishnan, 1996). Specifically, the overall satisfaction induces trust (Ganesan, 1994; Selnes, 1998) by contributing to brand confidence in fulfilling its commercial promise and protecting consumer welfare and interest. The brand satisfaction is thus assumed to be positively associated with brand trust.

H7: Brand satisfaction is positively related to brand trust.

Indirect Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust via UEBV

Customer satisfaction may not always lead to loyalty. Some studies have found that satisfaction directly affected repurchase, but other studies show that satisfaction does not necessarily lead to higher repurchase (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Stewart, 1997). Much attention, therefore, has gone into the study of trust to shed light on such an inconsistent phenomenon. In this study, the construct of UEBV was coined as an exploratory approach in elaborating upon the brand satisfaction-brand trust path.

Also, this study defined the brand value as the perceived brand benefit relative to its costs, assessed by attendees, of keeping up a relationship with a conference. Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol (2002, p. 21) defined value as “the consumer’s perception of the benefits (e.g., perceived quality and convenience) minus the costs (e.g., money, time, and efforts) of maintaining an ongoing relationship with a service provider.” This study draws on their definition to operationalize the brand value since the definition reflects a relationship perspective whereby trust is a cornerstone of relationship marketing (Berry, 1996) and commitment or loyalty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

UEBV can be construed from the mechanism of expectation. An expectation is an “anticipation of future consequences based on prior experience, current circumstances, or other sources of information” (Tryon, 1994, p. 313) and is updated to cumulative or current information during or after satisfaction, the overall evaluation of consumption experience (Oliver, 1997; Yi & La, 2004).

The mechanism of updated expectations can be more easily reflected in the adaptive expectation model (Johnson et al., 1995) that individual expectations form as individuals’ prior beliefs and expectations are updated to cumulative or current information during or after consumption. The updated expectation becomes a prior

expectation used as a standard in judging future consumption experience (Yi, 1990). This loop, moving back and forth between the prior and updated expectation, will be maintained as the learning of satisfaction (consumption experiences) continues to take place.

According to Oliver (1997), customers patronize services with expectations that the services will fulfill their values, desires, and needs. Specifically, the expectation of value, desire, and need (three expectation components) shapes expectation, and those expectation components are presumed to be adjusted to transactional or cumulative satisfaction. Among three components, this study focused on the expectation of value from two perspectives. First, because value is inferred from satisfaction (Patterson & Spreng, 1997; Strandvik & Liljander, 1994), expectation of brand value is updated to satisfaction. Value is a cognitive-based construct determined by discrepancy from trade-off of benefit and sacrifice. The formation of value is in much the same way satisfaction is shaped by (dis)confirmation between performance and expectation. On the other hand, satisfaction is an affective response. Value can be perceived from satisfaction in the sense that cognitive process induces affective responses, according to seminal work in the social sciences (Weiner, 1986). Second, the value serves as a crucial constituent of relationship marketing (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996) to affect brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) by providing more (relational) benefits than sacrifice, which will be more elaborated from UEBV-brand trust path. In summary, the positive effect of brand satisfaction on UEBV rests on the premise that attendees favorably update the expectation of the brand value as they learn new and cumulative information from episodic or cumulative satisfaction.

H8: Brand satisfaction is positively associated with UEBV.

The definition of brand trust in this study views trust as a belief or expectation about confidence in an exchange partner that arises from the partner's expertise and reliability (Anderson & Weitz, 1990; Schurr & Ozanne, 1985). The positive effect of UEBV on brand trust builds on the reasoning that attendees' favorable UEBV firms up the expectation about confidence in a conference through more (relational) benefits, perceived from UEBV, of sustaining an ongoing relationship with the conference. In other words, relational benefits that enhance value (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002) contribute

to favorable UEBV and hence brand trust by reinforcing the long-term relationship in a reciprocal manner (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998).

Relational benefits are conceptualized as the benefits customers gain from long-term relationships going beyond service performance (Gwinner et al., 1998). Gwinner et al. (1998) postulated that relational benefits consist of social, confidence, economic, and special treatment benefits. Social benefits are represented by feelings of personal recognition, friendship, rapport, familiarity, and social support (Barnes, 1994; Berry, 1995). Confidence benefits suggest feelings of low risk and security. The concepts of confidence and trust may be inextricably intertwined and indeed look similar. The confidence benefit, however, is regarded as a distinct benefit from long-term relationships, especially when customers evaluate service provider alike in quality (Gwinner et al., 1998). Economic benefits could include eligibility for special pricing awarded from long-term relational exchange. Lastly, special treatment benefits are perceived as additional favors or preferential treatment not normally available for regular customers. The findings from the Gwinner et al. (1998) study showed that customers rated confidence benefits as the most important benefit, followed by social and special treatment benefits.

Similarly, Raval and Grönroos (1996) posited that critical components of relationship value are safety, credibility, security, and continuity that enhance trust. Trust builds up as attendees feel safety, reliable, and confident with a conference after a few positive consumption experiences. In conclusion, generalized expectancy of conference performance in the near future (brand trust) is further strengthened through relational benefits, as signified by UEBV that is based on cumulative brand satisfaction.

H9: UEBV is positively associated with brand trust.

Brand Trust-ABL Path

Oliver (1997, p. 392) defined brand loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.” This definition manifests the two different aspects of brand loyalty: behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Assael, 1998; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Behavioral brand loyalty is composed of repeated patronage of the brand while “attitudinal brand

loyalty includes a degree of dispositional commitment in terms of some unique value associated with the brand” (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). Attitudinal brand loyalty is assessed by intention of word-of-mouth (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993), repurchase intention (Cronin & Taylor, 1992), and willingness to pay a premium price (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996).

According to Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), brand trust affects attitudinal brand loyalty by building on brand commitment in relationship marketing. Commitment has been defined as "an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship" (Moorman et al., 1992, p. 316). Moorman et al. (1992) and Morgan and Hunt (1994) found that trust leads to commitment in business-to-business relational exchanges because relationships characterized by trust are so highly valued that parties will want to commit themselves to such relationships (Hrebiniak, 1974). That is, a trusted brand would evoke a higher degree of dispositional commitment to the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), thereby enhancing repeat attendance intention to the brand, attitudinal brand loyalty.

H10: Brand trust is positively associated with attitudinal brand loyalty.

Differential Effect of Brand Knowledge

As previously mentioned, Keller (1993) argued that customer-based brand equity is signified by the differential effect of brand knowledge comprising strong brand awareness with favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in consumer minds. This study assumed that the I-CHRIE annual conference (IC) holds higher attendee-based brand equity than regional CHRIE conferences (RC) in the sense that IC is considered a major conference to CHRIE and that IC generates more favorable brand knowledge due to stronger brand awareness with more favorable brand associations from IC. Specifically, IC celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2006, whereas for example, APAC CHRIE and EURO CHRIE, major RCs, celebrated their 4th and 24th, respectively. IC has been providing a firm basis for RC to progress by displaying a showcase about educational programs, exhibit, social functions, and sponsorship programs. Most hospitality educators recognize the motherhood and superiority of IC to RC. Since this study captures the differential effect of brand knowledge through the mean scores of brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL, it hypothesizes that attendees rate brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL for IC more favorably than ones for RC.

- H11a: Brand satisfaction is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.
- H11b: UEBV is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.
- H11c: Brand trust is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.
- H11d: ABL is more favorably perceived from I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Methodology

Data Collection

The population for the survey is association members who have attended their association meetings. To disclose the differential effect of brand knowledge in a detailed manner, this study sampled I-CHRIE members attending I-CHRIE annual conference or regional CHRIE conferences. Although the sampled association may not rigorously represent all professional association, factors involved in meeting participation are similar across associations (Oppermann, 1998).

Since the study was based on past experiences of the conferences, members who have not attended the I-CHRIE annual conference or regional CHRIE conferences were excluded. According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), a sample size of 150 or more is sufficient to gain parameter estimates with small standard errors and provide a converged and proper solution for models. To ensure standard errors small enough to be of practical use, the study targeted a sample size of at least 200 for each conference. This survey was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board.

Since members' email addresses were available from the target association directory, an online survey would be much faster and more economical than the traditional mail survey. Upon approval of I-CHRIE, the survey instrument was administered to the target sample via K-State Online survey system. An invitation email that includes a URL unique to people on recipient list was sent to them. I-CHRIE members participated in the survey by clicking the URL that leads to the survey website. Those who did not want to participate in the survey could simply block the emails by

clicking the remove button. A reminder was sent every 7 days until a maximum of 2 reminders have been sent. Data for RC and IC were collected in different periods, June 2006 and July 2006, respectively.

A lower response rate was expected from the survey to the RC since fewer members attended the RC as compared to the IC. To enhance the response rate, respondents to the regional conferences were offered an incentive: “Your participation in the survey will generate a \$2 donation to one of the following charity organizations (Children International, Christian Children’s Fund, UNICEF, World Vision) of your choice to help starving children across the world.”

The response rate was 20.1% (213 out of 1,036) for the IC and 19.4% (201 out of 1,036) for the RC. Demographic characteristics were similar across two samples: doctoral degree holders (IC: 67% vs. RC: 61%); academia occupants (IC: 91% vs. RC: 81%); and the gender ratio (IC: 58% male to 42% female vs. RC: 55% male to 45% female). The responses to the RC survey were accounted for most by the APAC CHRIE conference (26%), followed by Euro CHRIE (23%), KOMA (8%), South East (8%), and others (35%). Responses from different RC were incorporated into one composite data set that was compared to IC data.

Scale Development

After an extensive literature review, the instrument included questions to measure all of the constructs in the theoretical model. As shown in the Appendix A.2 and B.2, the instrument was finalized after a pilot test designed to enhance construct reliability and validity. Most items were measured on 7-point Likert-type scales, with anchors of 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

Building on convention and marketing literature (Oppermann, 1995; Price, 1993; Um & Crompton, 1992; Sirgy, 1982), each brand association had three to four-item scales. Item scales for the remaining constructs were established from the literature about consumer behavior and marketing (Keller, 1993; Oliver, 1997; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Yi & La, 2004) with two to three measurements.

Data Analysis and Results

According to Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, this study checked the measurement and structural model using SPSS for Windows 12.0 and AMOS 4. However, because this study was based on two samples (IC and RC), not single sample using the same measurements, the major concern was whether or not proposed measurement and structural models are applicable across two samples (Byrne, 1998). In line with the procedures recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1989), Byrne (1998), Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), Yi and La (2004), and Yoo (2002), the measurement invariance test and simultaneous structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis were conducted to examine proposed measurement and structural models. Furthermore, independent samples t tests were conducted to examine the differential effect of brand knowledge across IC and RC.

Reliability and Construct Validity Check

Reliability and construct validity were checked on the composite data (421) of IC and RC because the same measurements applied across two samples. The Cronbach's alpha that was used to estimate the reliability of multi-item scales was listed for each construct in Table 1: professional education (0.86), social networking (0.81), site selection (0.71), staff service (0.95), self-image congruence (0.96), brand awareness (0.87), brand satisfaction (0.91), UEBV (0.90), brand trust (0.92), and ABL (0.91). All of the alpha coefficients were above the cut-off point of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), indicating an acceptable level of reliability for each construct.

Insert Table 5.1 About Here

Average variance extracted (AVE) was also employed to assess convergent and discriminant validity. As shown in Table 5.1, all AVE exceeded 0.5, suggesting convergent validity was satisfied. Also, an AVE for each construct was greater than

squared correlation coefficients for a corresponding inter-construct, which confirms discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Testing for Measurement Invariance across Two Samples

A measurement invariance test that was simultaneously conducted across two groups through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess whether a measurement model is equivalent across two groups. Measurement invariance represents “whether or not, under different conditions of observing and studying phenomena, measurement operations yield measures of the same attribute” (Horn & McArdle, 1992, p. 117). If a lack of evidence supports measurement invariance, findings based on that measurement are at best uncertain and at worst mistaken (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998).

The general procedure of testing measurement invariance across two groups is to identify the chi-square difference between nonrestricted measurement model and full metric invariance model (invariance of factor loadings across two groups). If the chi-square difference test does not reveal a significant difference between two models, full metric invariance is supported, indicating that the measurement model is invariant across two groups (Yoo, 2002). Conversely, the induced meanings of factors would differ substantially across two groups when chi-square difference is significant. If full metric invariance had not been supported, this study would have adopted partial metric invariance model established by releasing an invariant factor loading at a time on the basis of modification indices and expected parameter changes (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998; Yoo, 2002).

When full metric invariance is supported, the full metric invariance model is used as a baseline model to test structural invariance across two groups. This occurs when factor loadings are found to be invariant across two groups (Yi & La, 2004; Yoo, 2002) and full metric invariance model minimizes the effect of possible variation across two groups in measurement structures (Bagozzi & Yi, 1989). However, if evidence for full metric invariance is lacking, partial metric invariance serves as a baseline model to test structural invariance across two groups (Yi & La, 2004).

Insert Table 5.2 About Here

As shown in Table 5.2, this study tested nonrestricted measurement model and full metric invariance model across high and low BBL groups. According to the goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2 = 1806.7$, $df = 778$, RMSEA=0.06, CFI =0.92, NFI =0.90) from the nonrestricted CFA model, the proposed measurement model was proved to fit the data. Full metric invariance was not supported, as the chi-square difference between nonrestricted measurement model and full metric invariance model was significant ($\Delta\chi^2(21) = 55.5$, $p < .05$). Therefore, the partial metric invariance model was adopted by relaxing some invariant factor loadings. Finally, the partial metric invariance model with ten invariant factor loadings was supported with evidence that the chi-square difference between nonrestricted and partial metric invariance models was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2(10) = 14.8$, $p > .05$). For the testing of structural invariance across two groups, partial metric invariance model was thus used as a baseline model to run structural model analysis (Yi & La, 2004; Yoo, 2002).

Simultaneous SEM Analysis across Two Samples

A baseline model (a partial metric invariance model) was tested simultaneously across IC and RC using simultaneous SEM analysis across two samples. Overall goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2 = 1965.7$, $df = 827$, RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.90, NFI = 0.91) showed that the structural model was parsimonious. As shown in Figures 5.2 and 5.3, all the proposed paths were supported except for relationships between self-image congruence and brand satisfaction ($\gamma_{15} = -.01$, $t = -.19$, $p > .05$) for IC and brand awareness and brand satisfaction (IC: $\gamma_{16} = -.17$, $t = -2.56$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\gamma_{16} = -.17$, $t = -2.45$, $p < .05$). Additionally, brand awareness showed a negative direction as opposed to H6 although it was significantly associated with brand satisfaction.

Insert Figure 5.2 and 5.3 About Here

Specifically, first, most brand associations positively influence brand satisfaction: professional education (IC: $\gamma_{11} = .50$, $t = 7.43$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\gamma_{11} = .31$, $t = 4.27$, $p < .05$); social networking (IC: $\gamma_{12} = .20$, $t = 2.39$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\gamma_{12} = .32$, $t = 4.16$, $p < .05$); site selection (IC: $\gamma_{13} = .22$, $t = 3.42$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\gamma_{13} = .15$, $t = 2.10$, $p < .05$); and staff service (IC: $\gamma_{14} = .27$, $t = 4.77$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\gamma_{14} = .24$, $t = 3.31$, $p < .05$). Self-image congruence-brand satisfaction path for RC showed a statistically positive relationship ($\gamma_{15} = .25$, $t = 5.03$, $p < .05$) although it turned out to be non-significant to IC. Second, brand satisfaction positively affected both UEBV (IC: $\beta_{21} = .84$, $t = 13.84$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\beta_{21} = .86$, $t = 8.10$, $p < .05$) and brand trust (IC: $\beta_{31} = .53$, $t = 6.43$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\beta_{31} = .81$, $t = 7.65$, $p < .05$) while UEBV positively influenced brand trust (IC: $\beta_{32} = .39$, $t = 4.80$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\beta_{32} = .17$, $t = 2.13$, $p < .05$). These findings indicated that UEBV partially mediated the effect of brand satisfaction on brand trust with a significant indirect effect (IC: $\beta_{IE} = 0.33$, $t = 4.53$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\beta_{IE} = 0.15$, $t = 2.06$, $p < .05$) (Holland, 1988; Sobel, 1990). The stronger mediating effect of UEBV for IC rather than for RC led to higher parameter estimates in a brand satisfaction-brand trust IC path than RC path. Finally, brand trust was positively related to ABL (IC: $\beta_{43} = .74$, $t = 11.80$, $p < .05$ vs RC: $\beta_{43} = .83$, $t = 14$, $p < .05$).

Independent Samples T Tests

For testing hypotheses 11a, 11b, 11c, and 11d designed to capture the differential effect of brand knowledge by comparing the mean scores of brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL between IC and RC, this study conducted independent samples t tests to identify statistically significant mean difference. According to Table 5.3, IC mean scores for each construct were generally higher than RC mean scores except for site

Insert Table 5.3 About Here

selection and staff service. Five constructs for IC were especially proved to be statistically higher than RC: social networking (IC: 5.31 vs. RC: 4.52, t-value: 6.463, $p < .05$), brand awareness (IC: 6.36 vs. RC: 5.55, t-value: 6.31, $p < .05$), brand satisfaction (IC: 5.06 vs. RC: 4.54, t-value: 4.09, $p < .05$), UEBV (IC: 4.68 vs. RC: 4.33, t-value: 2.663, $p < .05$), and ABL (IC: 4.90 vs. RC: 4.07, t-value: 6.095, $p < .05$). These findings presented the sufficient evidence that IC was more favorably evaluated than RC, supporting H11a, H11b, and H11d. In summary, most hypotheses were supported except for H5 (which was partially supported), H6, and H11c. The results of the hypothesis testing are discussed in the following section.

Discussions

According to simultaneous SEM across IC and RC, professional education, staff service, site selection, and social networking are positively related to brand satisfaction whereas brand awareness is negatively associated with it. Because brand satisfaction is a starting point in affecting UEBV, brand trust, and ABL, these four brand associations are presumed to be major sources of the differential effect of brand knowledge between IC and RC, suggesting important managerial implications for conference marketing and management.

First, in designing the conference program, associations should focus on various sessions that meet the needs of different groups rather than general programs for average attendees. The various educational sessions can be further facilitated with a variety of session formats – for example, panel discussions, small group discussions, interactive sessions, and videoconference. Thus, conference organizers should spend more on educational program design and the invitation of outstanding keynote speakers, presenters, and facilitators rather than on lavish entertainment and social events (PCMA, 2005).

Second, meeting planners should provide adequate training and education for their staff so that they are willing to interact with attendees and provide prompt service. During on-site operation, many conferences hire volunteers or temporary staff who usually lack experiences and knowledge and thus are likely to mishandle conference operation. Providing well-programmed orientation for volunteers and temporary staff will prepare them for on-site operation and to answer attendees' requests. Conference rehearsal could be an effective training program for staff, increasing their ability to respond to attendees and manage on-site operation.

Third, the conference venue is a critical factor because favored conference destinations alone can increase attendance levels (Oppermann, 1995). Traveling costs, accessibility, safety, and sightseeing are significant criteria in site selection (Oppermann, 1996) that change attendees' expectation about the destination. Associations, therefore, should identify and build on attendee perceptions about destination, thereby achieving desired attendance and financial return for a conference.

Finally, attendees usually get together with acquaintances during conference dates. Considering social networking also has positive effects on brand satisfaction, associations should develop strategies designed to encourage social networking among attendees. Social functions are good opportunities for associations to promote social networking. According to PCMA (2002), the Healthcare Convention and Exhibitors Association used a social function to facilitate networking. They designed each breakfast table with a photo of a Canadian icon: pictures of hockey teams, Canadian actors, and so on. Each attendee was to sit at a table matching a miniature photo each attendee received, thus sitting them with people she/he had never met. This was effective way to help attendees network with others and satisfy their attendance motivation.

Self-image congruence was partially supported; it was positively associated with brand satisfaction at RC whereas it was a negatively non-significant antecedent at IC. This fact led to the presumption of negative suppression whereby one of the independent variables has a negative beta weight when it is positively correlated with a dependent variable and other independent variables (Maassen & Bakker, 2001). Self-image congruence was positively correlated with brand satisfaction and other exogenous variables (see Table 1). Since other brand associations were more strongly associated

with brand satisfaction, self-image congruence lost its statistical power to them, thereby resulting in the negative non-significant antecedent.

The negative association of brand awareness with brand satisfaction is opposed to the hypothesized relationship in this research. This unique finding, however, may suggest significant implications about attendee behaviors that would be explained using the contrast theory. Contrast theory presumes that customers exaggerate the discrepancy between actual performance and product expectation when the product performance does not satisfy their expectation (Anderson, 1973). Specifically, higher expectations than actual performance lead to lower evaluation, whereas lower expectations than actual performance result in higher evaluation. The level of magnifying disconfirmation between expectation and performance depends on the degree of consumer expectation.

Expectation is formed through preconsumption experience, advertising, word-of-mouth, and product cues (Oliver, 1997). Oliver also pointed out that brand name strongly affects expectations in consumers' minds since it denotes customer perceptions of the firm, its products, and its services (Keller, 1998). The brand awareness of the CHRIE conference is very high because survey respondents are CHRIE members who have previous experience with the conference. This study thus relied on the premise that attendees' high expectations arising from high brand awareness likely exaggerate disconfirmation when conference products and services do not measure up to their expectations, which leads to lower evaluations and less satisfaction with the conference, thus shedding light on the inverse relationship between brand awareness and brand satisfaction.

Moreover, positive relationships existed on each path for brand satisfaction-UEBV, UEBV-brand trust, brand satisfaction-brand trust, and brand trust-ABL. Especially, it is noteworthy to look at the mediating effect of UEBV on brand satisfaction-brand trust path. For the purpose of depicting the flow of how satisfaction is transformed into repeat attendance intention, this study extended previous research on satisfaction, trust, and repurchase intention by adding UEBV. UEBV was found to serve as a partial mediator on brand satisfaction-brand trust path across two groups, suggesting that brand trust, the firm expectation that the brand will perform its promise, firms up through UEBV as well as through brand satisfaction. From the perspective of UEBV,

brand value is a significant contributor to brand trust in the sense that customers seek an exchange partner that provides maximum value (Kotler, 2000) and are committed to developing relationships because the exchange partner delivers highly valued benefits in the brand (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). That is, favorable UEBV, derived from brand satisfaction, that is not provided by alternative brands, strengthens the expectation of the brand's integrity and reliability, which in turn affects repeat-attendance intention and dispositional commitment to the conference.

Conclusion

As expected, IC showed higher attendee-based brand equity than RC in accordance with the differential effect of brand knowledge, as captured by higher mean scores for social networking, brand awareness, brand satisfaction, UEBV, and ABL.

Professional education ($\gamma_{11} = .50$) was the strongest brand association to predict brand satisfaction at IC while professional education ($\gamma_{11} = .31$) and social networking ($\gamma_{12} = .32$) remained the strongest predictor at RC. Also, IC was more favorably evaluated than RC on mean scores for social networking and brand awareness. That is, a firm relationship between professional education and brand satisfaction, a good opportunity of social networking, and strong brand awareness contributed to more favorable brand satisfaction, UEBV, and ABL, thereby creating higher attendee-based brand equity to IC.

With regard to overall managerial implications for educational conferences, four brand associations (professional education, staff service, site selection, and social networking) can contribute to the differential effect of brand knowledge through brand satisfaction. A negative path from brand awareness to brand satisfaction indicated that conferences with high brand awareness should consistently deliver high-quality service and product to meet attendees' high expectations. Persistent delivery of high-quality on education programs, staff training, venue selection, and networking would enable associations to obtain high attendee-based brand equity manifested by the high differential effect of brand knowledge. The retention of brand loyal attendees would especially induce deep commitment to the conferences and great resistance to other conferences' marketing strategies, thereby contributing to high revenue and market share.

Despite the importance of this study, its limitations cannot be denied. With the sample conferences from the same association, the findings may not rigorously represent the relationships among constructs unveiled in this study and thus may not be generalized to all association meetings. Specifically, the findings were exposed to the threat of sampling and nonresponse errors.

Sampling error exists when some characteristics, but not all, of people in the population of interest are surveyed (Dillman, 2000). Although sampling error cannot be completely eliminated and always occurs for a random sample, it can be minimized through larger samples. Therefore, selection of multiple association meetings is advised in a future study to further reduce sampling error, thereby enhancing external validity. It is also important to survey meetings from associations with different characteristics – for example, academic (e.g., I-CHRIE) vs. non-academic (e.g., Pacific Asia Travel Association) associations. Doing so would not only increase the generalizability of findings but also reveal distinct attendee behaviors between different types of association meetings, thereby enriching managerial and research implications.

Dillman (2000) pointed out that nonresponse error occurs when people who participate in a survey are different from those who do not, thereby posing a threat to external validity of a study. To reduce the threat of nonresponse error, minimum response rate of 50% should be achieved (Fowler, 2001). In consideration of response rates for IC (20.1%) and RC (19.4%), it is assumed that this study might have nonresponse error. Therefore, controlling for nonresponse error requires acceptable survey protocols designed to achieve higher response rate. This study recommends Dillman's (2000) four-time-contact email survey: a pre-notice; the questionnaire; a thank-you/reminder; and a replacement questionnaire.

Self-image congruence was not significantly associated with brand satisfaction in the context of IC. However, a non-significant finding could have resulted from a suppressed effect. As previously noted in the literature review, considering the relevance and importance of self-image congruence in the context of conference, a future study should reexamine the conceptual model by including self-image congruence without other brand associations. Because self-image is composed of four multiple self-images, it should be further divided into four dimensions so that the effect of each self-image will

be captured within the model. This would lead to findings about which dimension in self-image would be the most congruent with the generalized image of conference attendees, suggesting valuable implications for (re)positioning a conference to target attendees' self-images.

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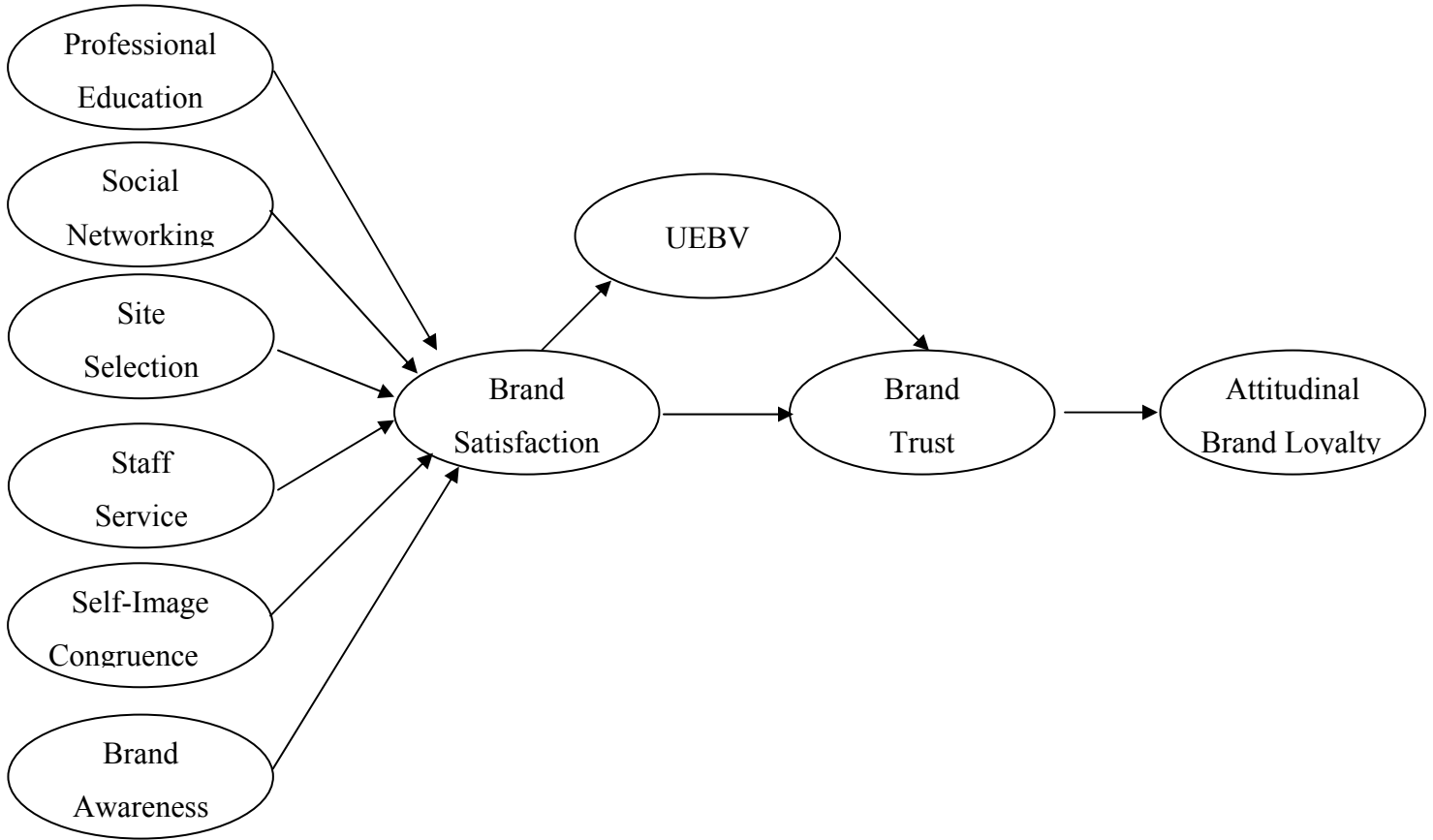
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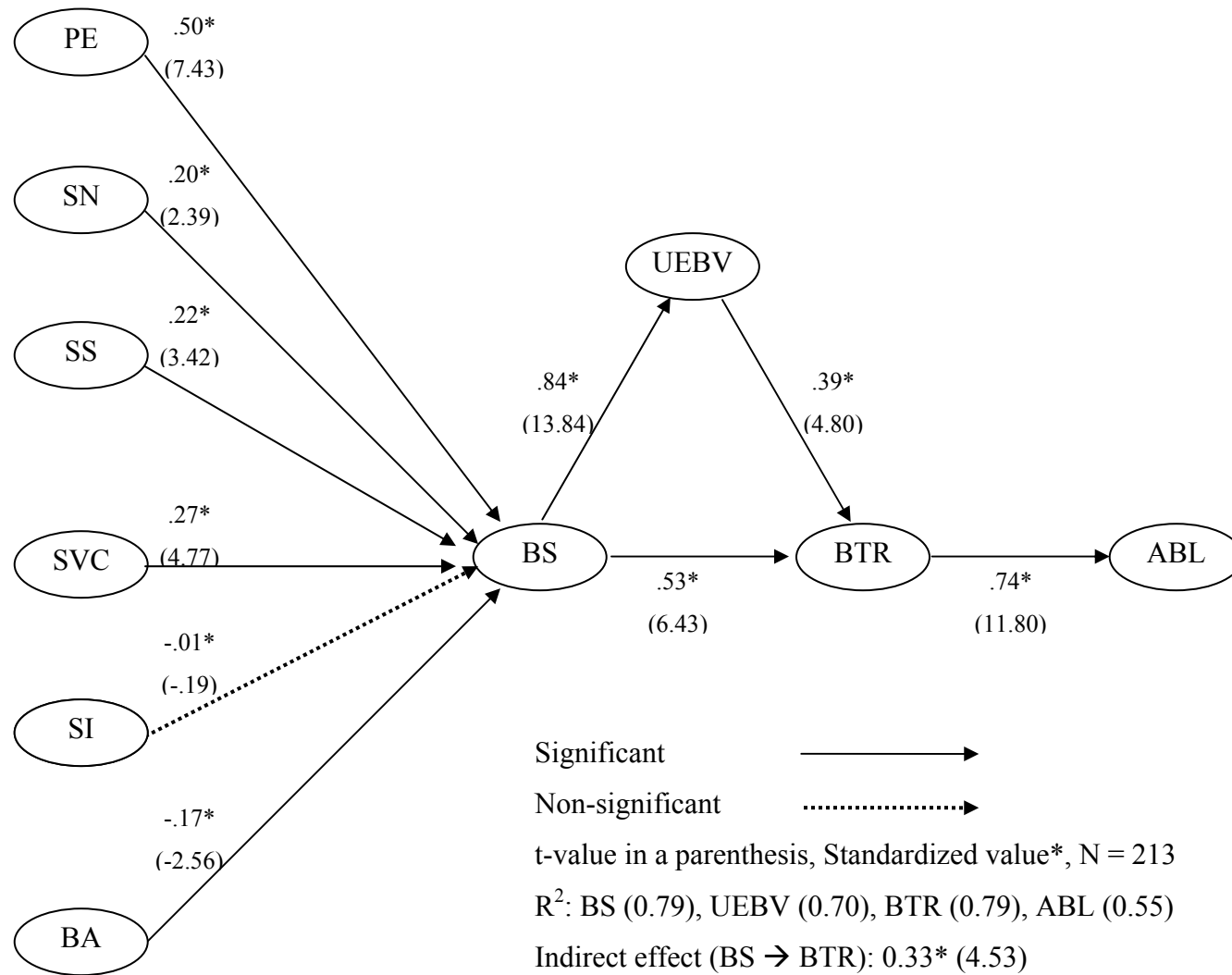
Figures and Tables

Figure 5.1 Theoretical Model of Attendee-Based Brand Equity



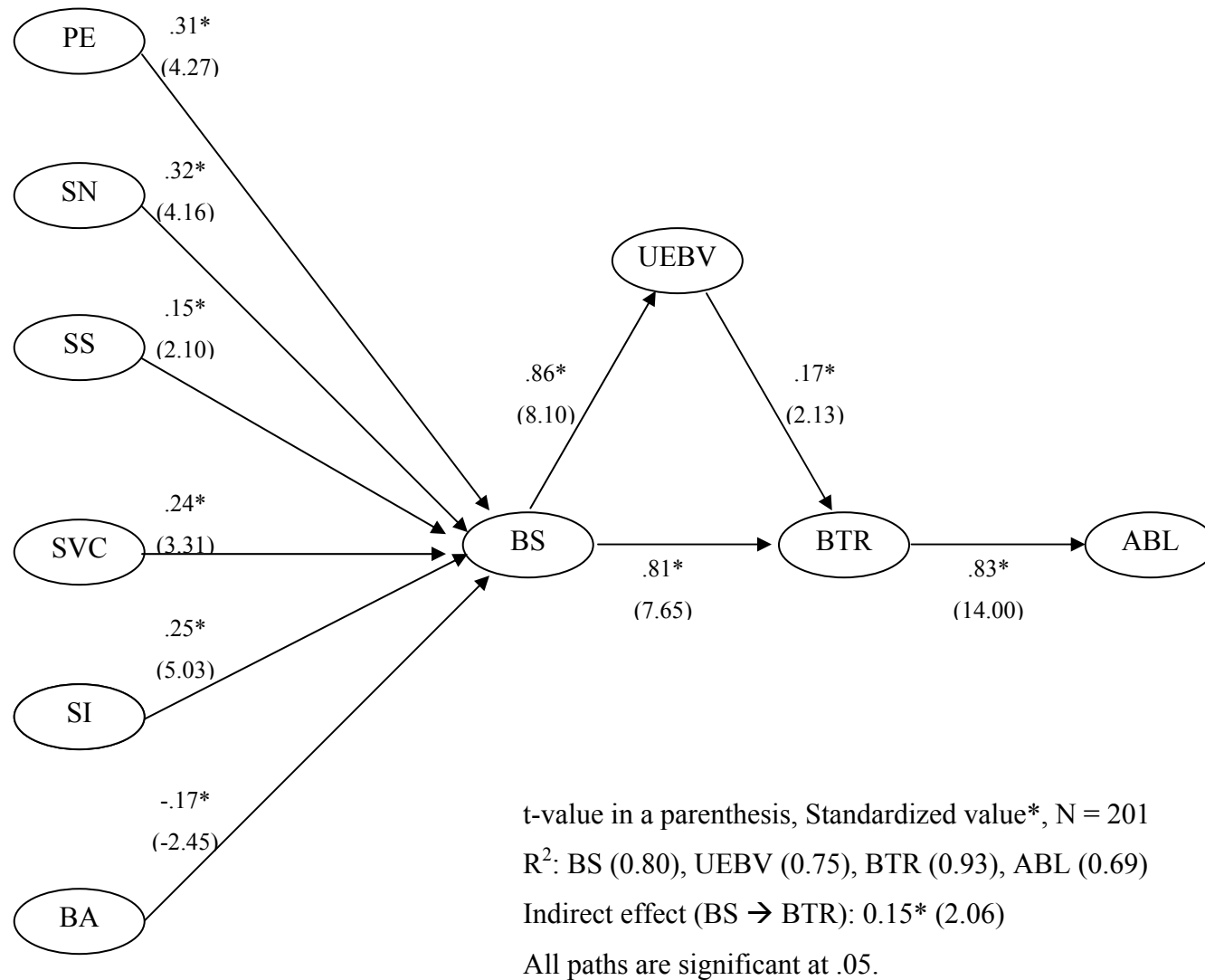
Note: UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value)

Figure 5.2 Structural Model Testing for IC



Note: PE (Professional Education), SN (Social Networking), SS (Site Selection), SVC (Staff Service), SI (Self-Image Congruence), BA (Brand Awareness)
BS (Brand Satisfaction), BTR (Brand Trust), UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value), ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty).

Figure 5.3 Structural Model Testing for RC



Note: PE (Professional Education), SN (Social Networking), SS (Site Selection), SVC (Staff Service), SI (Self-Image Congruence), BA (Brand Awareness)
 BS (Brand Satisfaction), BTR (Brand Trust), UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value), ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty).

Table 5.1 Correlations (squared correlation), Reliability, and AVE

	PE	SN	SS	SVC	SI	BA	BS	UEBV	BTR	ABL
PE	1.00									
SN	.49(.24)	1.00								
SS	.34(.12)	.33(.11)	1.00							
SVC	.52(.27)	.39(.15)	.52(.27)	1.00						
SI	.42(.18)	.47(.22)	.28(.08)	.42(.18)	1.00					
BA	.16(.03)	.50(.25)	.31(.10)	.33(.11)	.30(.09)	1.00				
BS	.68(.46)	.62(.38)	.47(.22)	.65(.42)	.52(.27)	.30(.09)	1.00			
IC BS	.80(.64)	.60(.36)	.58(.34)	.71(.50)	.52(.27)	.28(.08)	1.00			
UEBV	.62(.38)	.55(.30)	.40(.16)	.58(.34)	.52(.27)	.29(.08)	.78(.61)	1.00		
BTR	.68(.46)	.53(.28)	.44(.19)	.63(.40)	.58(.34)	.24(.06)	.81(.66)	.76(.58)	1.00	
ABL	.55(.30)	.61(.37)	.37(.14)	.48(.23)	.51(.26)	.30(.09)	.73(.53)	.64(.41)	.70(.49)	1.00
Reliability	.86	.81	.71	.95	.96	.87	.91	.90	.92	.91
AVE	.53	.76	.52	.78	.73	.70	.90	.75	.67	.59

Note: PE (Professional Education), SN (Social Networking), SS (Site Selection), SVC (Staff Service)

SI (Self-Image Congruence), BA (Brand Awareness), BS (Brand Satisfaction), BTR (Brand Trust)

UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value), ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty). All are significant at .01.

The row of IC BS presents the correlation among constructs for I-CHRIE conference. It was individually inserted to explain negative suppression effect.

Table 5.2 Testing for Measurement Invariance Across Groups

	Chi-Square	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Nonrestricted measurement model	1806.7	78	0.06	0.92	0.90
Full metric invariance (L(X)Y=IN)	1862.2	99	0.06	0.92	0.90
Partial metric invariance	1821.5	88	0.06	0.92	0.90

Note: Full metric invariance is not supported [$\Delta\chi^2(21) = 55.5, p < .05$]

Partial metric invariance is supported [$\Delta\chi^2(10) = 14.8, p > .05$], IN = Invariance

Table 5.3 Independent Samples T Tests

Construct	I-CHRIE Conference		Regional CHRIE Conference		t-value
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
PE	4.23	1.40	4.08	1.47	1.036
SN	5.31	1.23	4.52	1.29	6.463**
SS	5.02	1.05	5.13	1.00	-1.123
SVC	5.07	1.45	5.20	1.25	-.978
SI	4.72	1.33	4.56	1.32	1.251
BA	6.36	1.12	5.55	1.47	6.310**
BS	5.06	1.41	4.54	1.17	4.090**
UEBV	4.68	1.52	4.33	1.20	2.663**
BTR	4.61	1.48	4.48	1.24	.947
ABL	4.90	1.53	4.07	1.23	6.095**

Note: PE (Professional Education), SN (Social Networking), SS (Site Selection), SVC (Staff Service)

SI (Self-Image Congruence), BA (Brand Awareness), BS (Brand Satisfaction), BTR (Brand Trust)

UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value), ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty). **p < .01

CHAPTER 6 - An Examination of Attendee Brand Loyalty: Understanding the Moderator of Behavioral Brand Loyalty and the Mediator of Updated Expectation of Brand Value

Abstract

Retention of brand loyal attendees induces deep commitment to an association meeting and great resistance to other conferences' marketing efforts, thereby contributing to high revenue and market share to the association. This study elaborated on the path from brand satisfaction to attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL) via brand trust through updated expectation of brand value (UEBV) as a mediator on the brand satisfaction-brand trust path. Also, the study investigated the differential tendencies to ABL by high and low behavioral brand loyalty (BBL) attendees within the conceptual model. According to the structural invariance test across two groups, (1) all paths showed significantly positive sign; (2) UEBV was found to serve as mediator; and (3) BBL was supported as a moderator except for brand trust-ABL path. Unexpectedly, low BBL attendees showed a stronger tendency in the path from brand satisfaction to brand trust than high BBL attendees. The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: updated expectation of brand value (UEBV); attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL); behavioral brand loyalty (BBL)

Introduction

As the high proportion of association revenue (about 30.2% of their annual income) is derived from annual meetings (Shure, 2004), the growing number of associations competes for attendees. Professional associations are therefore increasingly concerned about the marketing strategies needed to continuously attract attendees to their annual meetings.

Well-branded tradeshow and meetings have been known to cultivate trust among participants and ensure high loyalty (PCMA, 2002). The strong-branded meeting has power against competitors in that it differentiates itself from them by delivering to attendees what is promised and unique (PCMA, 2002). The well-branded meeting is built on cumulative attendance experiences, thereby creating brand loyalty in attendees' minds.

Brand loyalty is an ultimate goal to professional associations in keeping and creating target attendees for their annual meetings. Brand loyalty cannot be overemphasized due to the tremendous benefits loyal customers bring to a firm; the benefits include decreased marketing and operating costs, growth of per-customer revenue, positive word-of-mouth, price premium, and low probability of switching to competitors (Reichheld, 1993; Reichheld & Teal, 1996).

In the marketing literature, brand loyalty has been examined using two approaches: behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. Behavioral brand loyalty (BBL) is reflected in the proportion of the same brand choice while “attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL) includes a degree of dispositional commitment in terms of some unique value associated with the brand” (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). Dick and Basu (1994) conceptualized loyalty as an interaction of behavior and attitude. They argued that genuine loyalty is characterized by high behavior congruent with high attitude and that neither one is enough to explain loyalty. Specifically, BBL is considered inherently inexplicable and insufficient to explain how brand loyalty is formed because a plenty of explanatory variables (e.g., schedule conflict, traveling expenses, alternative conferences) affect BBL (Odin, Odin, & Valette-Florence, 2001). Accordingly, in addition to the behavioral aspect of loyalty, attitudinal loyalty (strong internal disposition) should be simultaneously considered to increase the explanatory power of brand loyalty.

Customer satisfaction may not always lead to loyalty. Some studies have found that satisfaction directly affected repurchase, whereas satisfaction does not necessarily lead to higher repurchase in other studies (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Stewart, 1997). Such an inconsistent phenomenon can be attributed in part to the incongruence of BBL with ABL. Some researchers have conducted studies on various moderating roles of loyalty. Garbarino and Johnson (1999) investigated different positions of satisfaction, trust, and commitment by dividing behavioral loyal group into high and low behavioral loyal groups. Yi and La (2004) elaborated on the different effects of behavioral loyalty on attitudinal loyalty from the perspective of adjusted expectations. Their study shed light on different paths toward repurchase intentions by high and low behavioral loyal customers although little is yet known about the dynamic nature of loyalty.

Another plausible explanation of the phenomenon is that satisfaction does not always result in loyalty—this can be traced from the role of trust. Due to the shifting emphasis on relational marketing, key global constructs have been extended to trust in predicting loyalty (Moorman, Deshpande, & Zaltman, 1993; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Much attention, therefore,

has gone into the study of trust in order to delineate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

Despite the well-recognized significance of the brand loyalty concept in the business and service literature, no study has been published in the convention literature on conference brand loyalty. Motivated to deliver a more detailed elaboration of different paths to ABL, this study coined the construct of updated expectation of brand value (UEBV) as an exploratory approach to depict the brand satisfaction-brand trust path. In this study, UEBV was posited to mediate the effect of brand satisfaction on brand trust. Furthermore, because little research has disclosed different mechanisms between the high and low BBL groups, the different tendencies to ABL by high and low BBL attendees were investigated within the conceptual model of brand satisfaction-(UEBV)-brand trust-ABL paths (see Figure 6.1).

Insert Figure 6.1 About Here

Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the mediating effect of UEBV on the path from brand satisfaction to brand trust and moderating effect of BBL within the proposed conceptual model. This study captured a richer and more detailed picture of attendee behaviors to brand loyalty than the extant literature, thereby making a theoretical and empirical contribution to the understanding of attendees' relationships with conference brand and filling the research gap between convention and other service literature.

Literature Review

Explications of Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

Direct Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust

Oliver (1981, p. 27) conceptualized satisfaction as “the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer’s prior feelings about the consumption experience.” This definition reflects overall satisfaction toward the relationship with an exchange party. Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann (1994, p. 54) defined overall (cumulative) satisfaction as “an overall evaluation based on the

total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time.” Johnson, Anderson, and Fornell (1995) pointed out that overall satisfaction is distinguished by a cumulative construct that has built on past satisfaction or experience as well as expectations and perceived performance. Because this study was based on previous attendance experience, brand satisfaction was operationalized as overall satisfaction with a conference brand.

Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpande (1992) defined trust as a “generalized expectancy” of how an exchange partner will perform in the future. A “generalized expectancy” is elicited both from a type of cultural environment of how firms are expected to perform and from encounters within the relationship (Sabel, 1993).

This definition embraces two general streams of trust in the literature (Dwyer & Lagace, 1986). First, considerable research in marketing regards trust as an expectation about an exchange partner's trustworthiness attributed to the partner's expertise and reliability (Anderson & Weitz, 1990; Schurr & Ozanne, 1985). Second, trust has been treated as a behavioral intention that signifies a reliance on a partner and imposes susceptibility and uncertainty on the part of the trustor (Coleman, 1990; Schlenker, Helm, & Tedeschi, 1973). This perspective implies that, without susceptibility, trust is not needed because results are trivial to the trustor. It also suggests that uncertainty is an essential part of trust because trust would not be required if the trustor could exercise full control or knowledge over an exchange partner's actions (Coleman, 1990). Based on the literature of trust, brand trust in this study was conceptualized as the confidence of average attendees in the reliability and integrity of the brand with a firm expectation that the brand performs its stated function.

Trust is influenced by usage (postconsumption experiences) or satisfaction with the brand (Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996). Attendees build up the trust that a conference will be highly reliable when they are satisfied with the conference. However, the strong effect of brand satisfaction on brand trust requires positive consumption experiences cumulatively in that a trusted relationship evolves over time as a buyer and a seller learn about each other (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). In other words, the overall (cumulative) satisfaction has a significant effect on trust (Ganesan, 1994; Selnes, 1998) by enhancing brand confidence in delivering what is promised. Therefore, this study postulates that the brand satisfaction is positively associated with brand trust.

H1: Brand satisfaction is positively associated with brand trust.

Indirect Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust via UEBV

This study adopted UEBV as an exploratory construct to further elaborate on brand satisfaction-brand trust relationship from the perspective of trust as an expectation about a service provider. From the perspective of relational marketing, Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol (2002, p. 21) defined value as “the consumer’s perception of the benefits minus the costs of maintaining an ongoing relationship with a service provider.” This study built on their relational perspective of the brand value and defined it as the perceived brand benefit relative to its costs of sustaining a relationship with a conference.

Tryon (1994, p. 313) defined an expectation as an “anticipation of future consequences based on prior experience, current circumstances, or other sources of information.” UEBV is based on the mechanism of expectation that is updated to cumulative or current information during or after satisfaction (Oliver, 1997; Yi & La, 2004). When consumers assess future consumption experience, the updated expectation serves as a prior expectation and is updated again to postconsumption experience (Yi, 1990).

According to Oliver (1997), the expectation has three components: value, desire, and need. These three components shape expectation and are adjusted to satisfaction. This paper focuses on the expectation of value because value serves as a crucial constituent of relationship marketing (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996) and affects brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Hence, this study stands behind the reasoning that attendees have favorably UEBV as they experience new and cumulative satisfaction.

H2: Brand satisfaction is positively associated with UEBV.

As noted earlier, the definition of brand trust in this study views trust as an expectation about confidence in an exchange partner. Thus, the positive relationship of UEBV with brand trust rests on the premise that favorable UEBV strengthens expectation about confidence in a conference (brand trust) via more (relational) benefits perceived from UEBV.

Critical elements of relational values are safety, credibility, security, and continuity that enhance trust (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). Specifically, these elements are considered relational benefits (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998) that enhance value (Sirdeshmukh, et al., 2002) and hence brand trust by firming up the long-term relationship (Gwinner et al., 1998). That is, as attendees perceive more favorable UEBV through (relational) benefits after a few positive

consumption experiences, expectation about confidence in a conference (brand trust) is further reinforced.

H3: UEBV is positively associated with brand trust.

Brand Trust-ABL Path

Jacoby and Chestnut (1978, pp. 31-32) defined brand loyalty with six required conditions that is “(1) a biased (i.e., nonrandom), (2) behavioral response (i.e., purchase), (3) expressed over time, (4) of some decision-making unit, (5) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (6) is a function of evaluative (decision-making) processes.” This definition manifests the two different aspects of brand loyalty: behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Aaker, 1991; Assael, 1998). BBL is operationalized as the proportion of the same brand choices (Carpenter & Lehmann, 1985) as measured by the proportion of times attendees participate in the same conference in a particular category compared to the total number of attendances in the category. ABL is operationalized as repurchase intention (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) and willingness to pay premium price (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996).

Trust induces commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Consumers are likely to be committed to a particular relationship when the relationship builds on trust (Hrebiniak, 1974). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found out that a trusted brand stimulates a high level of brand commitment that in turn affects ABL. This study posits that trusted conference brand enhances ABL, repeat attendance intention associated with brand.

H4: Brand trust is positively associated with attitudinal brand loyalty.

BBL as a Moderator

Dick and Basu (1994) described well the interaction of attitudinal and behavioral loyalty by cross-classifying the concept of relative attitude with repeat patronage, proposing four different types of loyalty: (1) loyalty, (2) spurious loyalty, (3) latent loyalty, and (4) no loyalty (see Table 6.1).

Insert Table 6.1 About Here

Suppose that an attendee participates in only one conference. One plausible explanation for this loyalty is that the attendee appreciates the perceived quality and value of the conference; forms trust, reliance, and commitment toward the conference; and then decides to patronize the conference. This is called loyalty that results from the function of harmony between high relative attitude and repatronage (Dick & Basu, 1994) as signified by Oliver's (1997) definition of loyalty, providing a competitive edge and differentiating one service provider from others.

Another possible explanation is that the attendee habitually participates in the conference because no alternative conference is available or because the attendee has low brand familiarity with other conferences. This is called spurious loyalty, reflected in a low relative attitude accompanied by high repeat patronage (Dick & Basu, 1994). Keller (1998) also pointed out that brand loyalty is sometimes excluded from the conceptualization of brand equity because customers may habitually purchase a particular brand without really thinking much about why.

Conversely, commitment alone cannot establish loyalty, although it is indispensable to loyalty, because commitment just shows attitudinal loyalty, not behavioral loyalty. For example, an attendee has a high relative attitude toward a conference but does not patronize the conference due to situational constraints, including several alternative conferences, schedule conflict, and a lack of financial support. That is, commitment with low behavioral loyalty suggests latent loyalty - high relative attitude with low repeat patronage (Dick & Basu, 1994).

A low relative attitude pairing with low repeat patronage represents no loyalty. A service provider having no loyalty from customers should at least inspire them with spurious loyalty through the manipulation of social norms (e.g., interpersonal relationship) or situational experiences (e.g., promotions and brand familiarity) (Dick & Basu, 1994). Service providers should fully appreciate characteristics of both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty in their business context since neither loyalty alone can explain loyalty per se. Behavior and attitude should be put together to examine detailed properties of loyalty. Thus, this study employed BBL to investigate its moderating effect on the conceptual model.

Indirect Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust via UEBV

The indirect path lies in the proposition that the favorable expectation of brand value that is updated to satisfaction reinforces expectations about the confidence in brand (brand trust) through more (relational) benefits inferred from UEBV. Specifically, because high BBL attendees continue their relationship with brand more often than do low BBL attendees, high

BBL attendees are likely to experience more cumulative satisfaction than low BBL attendees, thereby favorably updating the expectation of brand value perceived from cumulative satisfaction. According to Gwinner et al. (1998), as customers pursue long-term relationship with a provider, they receive more (relational) benefits and consequently perceive more value (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Selnes, 1995). High BBL attendees are thus more likely than low BBL to strengthen an expectation about the confidence in brand by appreciating more (relational) benefits, reflected from the UEBV, of maintaining relationship with brand. In other words, relative to low BBL attendees, high BBL attendees form a deeper brand trust through more favorable UEBV, as based on more cumulative satisfaction. Therefore, this study postulated that the indirect path is stronger for high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

H5: Indirect path from brand satisfaction to brand trust via UEBV is stronger for high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Direct Path from Brand Satisfaction to Brand Trust

Trust is an overall or cumulative evaluation at some higher degree than satisfaction (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996), suggesting that cumulative consumption experiences evolve trust over time. This view is also reflected in “generalized expectancy” from the definition of trust in the sense that cumulative rather than episodic satisfaction should be required to settle down an expectation or belief about a brand. Because BBL is operationalized as the proportion of the same brand choices, high BBL attendees are likely to experience more cumulative satisfaction than low BBL attendees. Thus, brand satisfaction-brand trust path is posited to be stronger among high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

H6: Direct path from brand satisfaction to brand trust is stronger for high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Brand Trust-ABL Path

This relationship is construed from the effect of brand trust on ABL through brand commitment. As exchange partners learn to trust each other over time, commitment will be gradually established through cumulative experience (Dwyer et al., 1987)—a central component in transforming brand trust into ABL. This logic implies that as high BBL attendees participate in a conference more often, high BBL attendees possess stronger trust and commitment than low BBL attendees, building up more ABL. This assertion is supported by Garbarino and Johnson’s

(1999) study which showed that high behavioral loyal customers (long-term theatergoers) at a performance theater base their future intentions on trust and commitment more than low behavioral loyal customers (individual ticket buyers and occasional subscribers). Therefore, this study postulated that the path from brand trust to ABL is stronger for high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

H7: Brand trust-ABL path is stronger to high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Methodology

Data Collection

To investigate attendee brand loyalty for association meetings, this study sampled I-CHRIE members with previous experiences in attending the annual I-CHRIE conference. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) suggested that a sample size of 150 or more should be obtained to secure parameter estimates with small standard errors. To ensure a converged and proper solution for the proposed model, the study targeted a sample size of at least 200.

Upon the approvals of Institutional Review Board and I-CHRIE, an on-line survey instrument was sent to members on recipient list via an invitation email including a URL unique to them. Members could have access to the survey website by clicking the URL. Also, they could refuse the survey participation by clicking the remove button. Those who have not attended the conference were advised not to participate in the survey because the survey was based on the past attendance experience. To enhance the response rate, a reminder was sent every 7 days until a maximum of 2 reminders have been delivered.

Originally, the survey was electronically distributed to 1,249 I-CHRIE members, later reduced to 1,036 I-CHRIE members due to undeliverable emails and partial responses. Finally, 213 members responded to the survey, for a response rate of 20.1%. Respondents were mostly doctoral degree holders (67%) and academics (91%). The gender ratio of the respondents was 58% (male) and 42% (female).

Scale Development

Based on an extensive literature review, the instrument included questions for measurements of all constructs in the theoretical model. As shown in the Appendix A.2, the final version of the instrument was developed following a pilot test designed to enhance construct

reliability and validity. Most items were measured on 7-point Likert-type scales, with anchors of 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. Building on the literature on marketing and consumer behavior (Keller, 1993; Oliver, 1997; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Yi & La, 2004), item scales for constructs were established that had two to three measurements.

Data Analysis and Results

Structural equation modeling has been frequently used in psychology and social sciences because it enables researchers to assess and modify theoretical models (Bentler, 1983; Browne, 1984). Based on Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, this study tested (1) reliability and validity, (2) the measurement and structural models, and (3) relationships among constructs using SPSS for Windows 12.0 and AMOS 4.

However, due to the fact that the sample was divided into high and low BBL groups for testing the moderating effect of BBL, different two-step approach was implemented. The measurement and structural invariance testings were conducted across high and low BBL groups, as suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1989), Byrne (1998), Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1998), Yi and La (2004), and Yoo (2002). Finally, upon the evidence supporting the moderating effect of BBL, chi-square difference tests were conducted to identify whether differences between corresponding path coefficients across high and low BBL groups are statistically significant.

Reliability and Validity Check

Table 6.2 presents the Cronbach's alpha used to estimate the reliability of multi-item scales: brand satisfaction (0.95), UEBV (0.92), brand trust (0.92), and ABL (0.93). All of the alpha coefficients were above the cut-off point of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), indicating an acceptable level of reliability for each construct.

Insert Table 6.2 About Here

Average variance extracted (AVE) was also employed to assess convergent and discriminant validity. As shown in Table 2, all AVEs exceeded 0.5, suggesting that convergent validity was satisfied. Also, an AVE for each construct was greater than squared correlation

coefficients for a corresponding inter-construct, which confirms discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, a descriptive analysis was conducted on each construct to measure their means: brand satisfaction (5.06), UEBV (4.68), brand trust (4.61), and attitudinal brand loyalty (4.90), reflecting a somewhat positive evaluation for the CHRIE conference.

Testing for Measurement Invariance across High and Low BBL Groups

Survey respondents were divided into high (N = 107) and low (N = 106) BBL groups based on a median-split on their BBL. Before examining and comparing paths across high and low behavioral brand loyalty groups, a measurement invariance test that was simultaneously run across two groups in a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess whether a measurement model is equivalent across two groups. Measurement invariance represents “whether or not, under different conditions of observing and studying phenomena, measurement operations yield measures of the same attribute” (Horn & McArdle, 1992, p. 117). If a lack of evidence supports measurement invariance, findings based on that measurement are at best uncertain and at worst mistaken (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). The general procedure of identifying measurement invariance across two groups is to test the chi-square difference between nonrestricted measurement and full metric invariance (invariance of factor loadings across two groups) models. If the chi-square difference test does not show a significant difference between two models, the measurement model is invariant across two groups (Yoo, 2002). On the other hand, the significant chi-square difference indicates that factors would differ substantially across two groups.

Insert Table 6.3 About Here

As shown in Table 6.3, this study tested a nonrestricted measurement model and a full metric invariance model across high and low BBL groups. According to the goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2 = 200.6$, $df = 92$, $RMSEA = 0.07$, $CFI = 0.96$, $NFI = 0.94$) from the nonrestricted CFA model, the proposed measurement model was found to fit the data. Full metric invariance was supported, as the chi-square difference between the nonrestricted measurement model and the full metric invariance model was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2 (8) = 11.3$, $p > .05$). It was therefore

concluded that the proposed measurement model applied across the two groups. For the testing of structural invariance across two groups, the full metric invariance model was used as a baseline model to run structural equation modeling (SEM) because factor loadings were found to be invariant across the two groups (Yi & La, 2004; Yoo, 2002) and the full metric invariance model minimizes the effect of possible variation across the two groups in measurement structures (Bagozzi & Yi, 1989).

Testing for Structural Invariance across High and Low BBL Groups

The structural invariance test measures whether a proposed structural model is equivalent across two groups. The procedure of a structural invariance test is similar to the one used for the measurement invariance test. First, the chi-square difference test should be conducted between a baseline model (full metric invariance of structural model in this study) and full path invariance of structural model (invariance of paths across two groups). Second, if the baseline and constrained models are not significantly different, it is concluded that the structural model is invariant across two groups (Byrne, 1998). However, when the baseline and constrained models are significantly different, it is assumed that the structural model is different across two groups, suggesting a moderating effect on causal relationships in the model (Yoo, 2002). Finally, if evidence supports a moderating effect, chi-square difference tests would be conducted to test whether the differences in parameter estimates (paths) are statistically significant (Bagozzi & Yi, 1989; Yi & La, 2004).

Insert Table 6.4 About Here

In the baseline model (full metric invariance of structural model), SEM was simultaneously conducted across high and low behavioral brand loyalty groups. According to the goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2 = 223.9$, $df = 104$, $RMSEA = 0.07$, $CFI = 0.96$, $NFI = 0.93$) in Table 6.4, the proposed structural model was confirmed to be parsimonious.

Insert Figure 6.2 and 6.3 About Here

Moreover, as shown in Figures 6.2 and 6.3, H1 to H4 were supported in high and low BBL groups, demonstrating that each path in the high and low BBL groups had a positive coefficient: (1) brand satisfaction-UEBV path (high: $\gamma_{11} = .90$, $t = 10.90$ vs low: $\gamma_{11} = .73$, $t = 7.28$); (2) UEBV-brand trust path (high: $\beta_{21} = .47$, $t = 3.67$ vs low: $\beta_{21} = .31$, $t = 3.36$); (3) brand satisfaction-brand trust path (high: $\gamma_{21} = .46$, $t = 3.69$ vs low: $\gamma_{21} = .59$, $t = 6.37$); and (4) brand trust-ABL path (high: $\beta_{32} = .72$, $t = 8.58$ vs low: $\beta_{32} = .76$, $t = 8.77$).

To test H5 to H7 in conjunction with the moderating effect of BBL on paths in a conceptual model, the chi-square difference test was employed between the baseline model and full path invariance of structural model. Because of the significant chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2(4) = 11$, $p < .05$) in Table 6.4, the moderating effect of BBL was inferred across the two groups.

Due to sufficient evidence of a moderator of BBL, chi-square difference tests were conducted to examine whether or not differences in parameter estimates were statistically significant across two groups. According to Table 6.5, the baseline model was estimated by allowing all paths to be freely estimated. In the nested model, a particular path (e.g., brand satisfaction-UEBV) was fixed to be equal across two groups. Because the models are nested, the chi-square difference between baseline model and nested model should be distributed as chi-square with degrees of freedom incurred from the difference in the number of free parameters (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1984). That is, the chi-square difference between the baseline model and the nested model computed for 1 degree of freedom allows the test of a significant difference in path coefficient across the two groups (Bagozzi & Yi, 1989).

Insert Table 6.5 About Here

As Table 6.5 shows, the corresponding two paths were individually examined to assess the chi-square difference between the baseline model and the nested model. First, with respect to the path from brand satisfaction to UEBV, the high BBL group showed a higher path coefficient

than the low BBL group with the significant chi-square difference (high: $\gamma_{11} = .90$, $t = 10.90$ vs low: $\gamma_{11} = .73$, $t = 7.28$, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 10$ $p < .05$). Second, the path from UEBV to brand trust was stronger for the high BBL group than the low BBL group (high: $\beta_{21} = .47$, $t = 3.67$ vs low: $\beta_{21} = .31$, $t = 3.36$, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 6.8$ $p < .05$) with a significant chi-square difference. The first two findings support H5. Third, as opposed to H6, the path from brand satisfaction to brand trust was statistically stronger for the low loyalty group than the high BBL group (high: $\gamma_{21} = .46$, $t = 3.69$ vs low: $\gamma_{21} = .59$, $t = 6.37$, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 4.4$ $p < .05$). This unexpected result can be attributed to the stronger mediating effect of UEBV on the brand satisfaction-brand trust path in the high BBL group than in the low BBL group (high: $\beta_{IE} = 0.42$, $t = 3.48$ vs low: $\beta_{IE} = 0.23$, $t = 3.05$) (Holland, 1988; Sobel, 1990). Finally, according to a non-significant chi-square difference between two paths from brand trust to ABL across two groups, the path coefficient was not found to be statistically higher in the low BBL group than in the high BBL group (high: $\beta_{32} = .72$, $t = 8.58$ vs. low: $\beta_{32} = .76$, $t = 8.77$, $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 0.7$ $p > .05$), implying that BBL does not moderate the path across the two groups. Thus, H7 was not supported. The results of hypothesis testing are described in the following section.

Implications

SEM indicated that positive relationships exist within all paths in a theoretical model across high and low BBL groups. It is especially important to note the mediating effect of UEBV on brand satisfaction-brand trust path. For the purpose of depicting the way in which satisfaction is transformed into repeat attendance intention, this study extended previous research on satisfaction, trust, and repurchase intention by adding UEBV. UEBV was found to serve as a partial mediator on brand satisfaction-brand trust path across two groups, suggesting that brand trust, the firm expectation that the brand will perform its promise, firms up through UEBV as well as through brand satisfaction. From the perspective of UEBV, brand value is a significant contributor to brand trust in the sense that customers seek an exchange partner that provides maximum value (Kotler, 2000) and are committed to developing relationships because the exchange partner delivers highly valued benefits to the brand (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). That is, a favorable UEBV, derived from brand satisfaction, which shows that no alternative brands provide similar strength bolsters the expectation of the brand's integrity and

reliability, which in turn affects repeat-attendance intention and dispositional commitment to the conference.

This study further extended the proposed theoretical model by dividing it into high and low BBL groups designed to unveil the differential characteristics or mechanism between two groups. Except for brand trust-ABL path, BBL was found to moderate all paths. In the indirect path (brand satisfaction to brand trust via UEBV), high BBL attendees hold significantly higher relationships than low BBL attendees. This finding supports the notion that as high BBL attendees sustain a longer relationship with a particular conference than low BBL attendees, high BBL attendees experience more cumulative satisfaction and update favorable expectations of brand value through which more (relational) benefits are perceived, thereby solidifying expectations about confidence in brand (brand trust). That is, the duration of the relationship (behavioral loyalty) was confirmed to make a significant difference to the indirect path.

The direct path (brand satisfaction-brand trust), however, revealed a paradoxical finding: low BBL attendees displayed a stronger tendency than high BBL attendees. This unexpected finding arose from the higher mediating effect of UEBV on brand satisfaction to brand trust in the high BBL group than the low BBL group, as indicated by the indirect effect. In other words, the direct path became stronger for the low BBL group than the high BBL group based upon the more powerful mediating effect of UEBV in the high BBL group on the direct path. This finding implicates the theoretical notion that value drives behavioral loyalty.

Neal (1999) posited that value, instead of satisfaction, is a powerful predictor of loyalty. According to Neal (1999), consumers who intend to purchase a certain service tend to look over other service choices in a particular category and obtain an alternative list. Consumers classify service choices within the list in the order of value services offered and then select them from the top of the value rank.

Another unique explanation of the effect of value on loyalty can be found in goal and action identification theories, positing that (1) customer actions are steered or denoted by the significant goal they achieve, (2) goals are classified in a particular rank, with highest ranked goals and lowest ranked goals, and (3) customers control their actions to reach goals at the highest rank (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Vallacher & Wegner, 1987). The highest ranked goal is regarded as value in the relational marketing (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002) because customers seek an exchange partner providing maximum value (Kotler, 2000). According to these theories,

customers control their actions by, for instance, being loyal to a provider to the extent that they achieve the value, the highest ranked goals (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). That is, in line with the effect of value on behavioral loyalty, the impact of UEBV is more powerful for high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Finally, BBL was not found to moderate the brand trust-ABL path. This result is consistent with Dick and Basu's (1994) argument that loyalty should be illuminated on two dimensions of behavior and relative attitude and is determined by the strength of relationship between two dimensions (see Table 1). That is, high BBL can pair with high or low ABL, and vice versa because the relationship between the two dimensions is mediated by social norms, situational factors, and other explanatory variables (Dick & Baus, 1994; Odin et al., 2001). Hence, to enhance the predictive ability of brand loyalty, researchers or practitioners should increase efforts to integrate two notions of behavior and attitude into the measurement of brand loyalty.

Conclusion

In this study, UEBV played a critical role in delivering a detailed picture of ABL formation as a mediator of the brand satisfaction-brand trust path. It also contributed to the manifestation of a moderating effect of BBL in a theoretical model. Therefore, professional associations should direct more efforts toward cultivating brand loyalty by enhancing UEBV. An effective way to improve UEBV can start from the management of professional education, social networking, and site selection, which have been considered important factors in the convention literature (Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993). This is especially true when looking at methods designed to satisfy attendees and incur UEBV because the factors significantly affect the conference participation decision-making process.

Professional education is one of major meeting products people buy (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993). According to achievement motivation, people become satisfied when they sense achievement through education (Butler, 1999). To enhance satisfaction with a conference, the educational programs should be designed to maximize attendees' achievement motivation. Madsen (2003) contended that social networking exists when people engage in relations. People are dissatisfied when they fail to establish this code of interaction (Brown, 2001). Various social networking opportunities with other colleagues or professionals stimulate

participation in a conference (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993) and induce satisfaction with the conference. Site selection has been a key in conference management and marketing (Go & Govers, 1999) in determining attendance level and thus the success of the meeting. Also, a conference venue can serve as an extrinsic cue used by prospective attendees as a basis for deciding to participate. Therefore, positive experiences with the conference venue contribute to overall satisfaction with the conference. That is, cumulatively satisfied with such key factors, attendees are likely to favorably update their expectations of brand value, to build up brand trust, and thus to nurture brand loyalty to their conferences.

Brand loyalty presents invaluable benefits to associations in a situation in which associations in similar disciplines compete for potential attendees. Benefits from brand loyal customers lead to declining marketing costs (Aaker, 1991). The reduced marketing costs are attributed to (1) lower costs of maintaining loyal customers than of creating new ones; (2) positive word-of-mouth by loyal customers; (3) low likelihood of switching to competitors; and (4) less price sensitivity (Reichheld, 1993). These benefits further enhance market share and profitability. Thus, associations should build their conference marketing and management on brand loyalty by carefully designing benefits attendees consider important. Persistent delivery of high-quality education programs, venue selection, and networking enables associations to obtain cumulative satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and consequently brand loyalty. Retention of brand loyal attendees would induce deep commitment to the conferences and great resistance to other conferences' marketing strategies, thereby contributing to high revenue and market share.

Despite the careful design of the study, there were limitations. As UEBV was coined as an exploratory approach, little previous research on UEBV was available to conceptually and empirically clarify that concept. Subsequent studies are encouraged to test UEBV in various business contexts. For instance, the effect of perceived quality and sacrifice on UEBV should be examined from the perspective of high and low loyal groups. In determining value, the high loyal group usually places more weight on quality, whereas the low loyal group is sensitive to sacrifice. That is, the high loyal group is more likely to perceive favorable UEBV and develop more trust and commitment. The moderating effect of loyalty on the perceived quality/sacrifice-UEBV relationship would theoretically contribute to the generalization of the construct.

Furthermore, with one association conference, the findings may have a threat to the external validity. Specifically, one sample conference may pose sampling errors while low

response rate (20.1%) may cause nonresponse errors (Dillman, 2000). These two errors reduce the generalizability of the findings. To reduce the errors, multiple meetings and efficient survey protocols are advised for a future study to enhance external validity.

This study examined the moderating effect of BBL to disclose the differential effect of high and low BBL. To precisely unveil the mechanism of brand loyalty, a future study should integrate both BBL and ABL into one brand loyalty construct and investigate the moderating effect of brand loyalty by dividing brand loyalty into high and low brand loyalty groups. The findings will present more accurate information about the brand loyalty mechanism because brand loyalty is measured on both dimensions of behavior and attitude.

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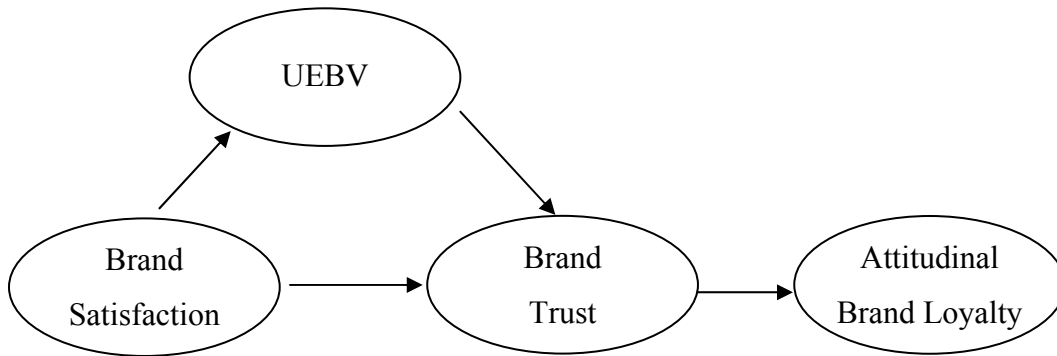
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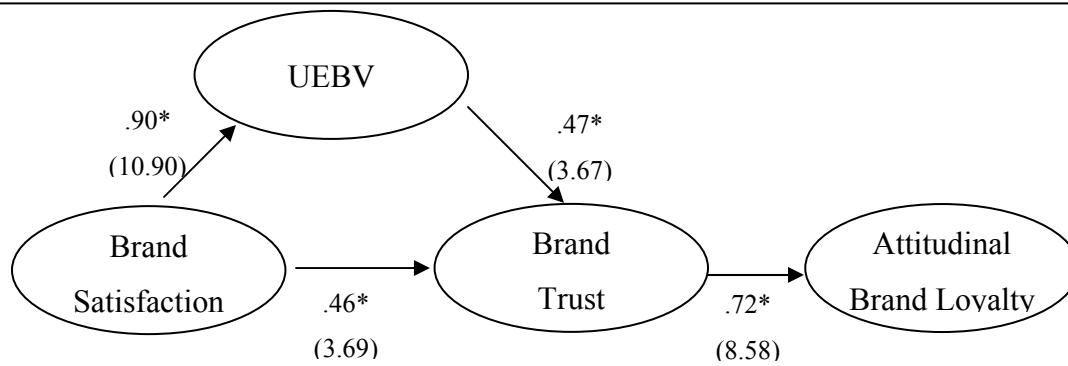
Figures and Tables

Figure 6.1 Theoretical Model



Note: Two Identical Models for Low and High Behavioral Brand Loyalty Groups
UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value)

Figure 6.2 Structural Model Testing for High BBL Group



t-value in a parenthesis

Standardized value*

R^2 : UEBV (0.80), BTR (0.81), ABL (0.52)

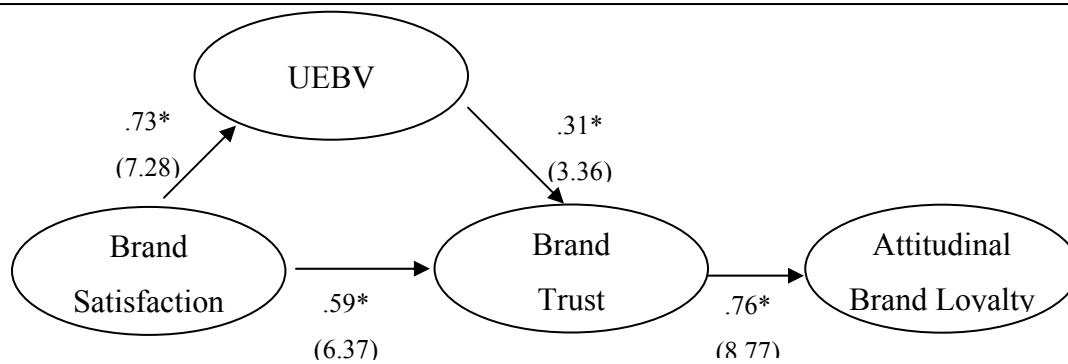
Indirect effect (BS \rightarrow BTR): 0.42* (3.48)

N = 107

Note: BS (Brand Satisfaction), UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value), BTR (Brand Trust)

ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty). All are significant at 0.01.

Figure 6.3 Structural Model Testing for Low BBL Group



t-value in a parenthesis

Standardized value*

R^2 : UEBV (0.53), BTR (0.71), ABL (0.59)

Indirect effect (BS \rightarrow BTR): 0.23* (3.05)

N = 106

Note: BS (Brand Satisfaction), UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value), BTR (Brand Trust)

ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty). All are significant at 0.01.

Table 6.1 Dick and Basu's (1994) Relative Attitude-Behavior Relationship

		Repeat Patronage	
		High	Low
Relative Attitude	High	Loyalty	Latent Loyalty
	Low	Spurious Loyalty	No Loyalty

Table 6.2 Correlations (squared correlation), Reliability, AVE, and Mean

	BS	UEBV	BTR	ABL
BS	1.00			
UEBV	.76(.58)	1.00		
BTR	.81(.66)	.75(.56)	1.00	
ABL	.73(.53)	.58(.34)	.68(.46)	1.00
Reliability	.95	.92	.92	.93
AVE	.87	.80	.80	.81
Mean	5.06	4.68	4.61	4.90
Std. Dev.	1.41	1.52	1.48	1.53

Note: BS (Brand Satisfaction), UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value)

BTR (Brand Trust), ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty). All are significant at .01.

Table 6.3 Testing for Measurement Invariance Across Groups

	Chi-Square	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Nonrestricted measurement model	200.6	92	0.07	0.96	0.94
Full metric invariance (L(X)Y=IN)	211.9	100	0.07	0.96	0.93

Note: Full metric invariance is supported [$\Delta\chi^2(8) = 11.3$, $p > .05$], IN = Invariance

Table 6.4 Testing for Structural Invariance Across Groups

	Chi-Square	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Full metric invariance (L(X)Y=IN)	223.9	104	0.07	0.96	0.93
Full path invariance (L(X)Y=IN, GA=IN, BE=IN)	234.9	108	0.07	0.96	0.92

Note: The moderating effect of behavioral brand loyalty exists [$\Delta\chi^2(4) = 11, p < .05$]. IN = Invariance

Table 6.5 Chi-Square Difference Tests for Paths

Paths	Fit of the Model with the Path		Test of Invariance
	(Baseline Model) Freely Estimated	(Nested Model) Fixed to be Equal	$\Delta\chi^2$ Test
BS \rightarrow UEBV	$\chi^2(104) = 223.9$	$\chi^2(105) = 233.9$	$\Delta\chi^2(1) = 10$ p < .05
UEBV \rightarrow BTR	$\chi^2(104) = 223.9$	$\chi^2(105) = 230.7$	$\Delta\chi^2(1) = 6.8$ p < .05
BS \rightarrow BTR	$\chi^2(104) = 223.9$	$\chi^2(105) = 228.3$	$\Delta\chi^2(1) = 4.4$ p < .05
BTR \rightarrow ABL	$\chi^2(104) = 223.9$	$\chi^2(105) = 224.6$	$\Delta\chi^2(1) = 0.7$ p > .05

Note: BS (Brand Satisfaction), BTR (Brand Trust), UEBV (Updated Expectation of Brand Value)

ABL (Attitudinal Brand Loyalty).

CHAPTER 7 - Summary and Conclusions

Annual meetings of associations are highly profitable to the hospitality and tourism industry because of the large number of delegates they bring to conference destinations. Association meetings represent the most important segment of the convention industry, accounting for 71% of direct expenditure in the convention industry (Alkjaer, 1993), 78% of all attendees, and 80% of all conventions and meetings (Edelstein & Benini, 1994). Recently, more attention has been paid to managing and marketing association meetings because of (1) the growing number of associations competing for attendees (Loverseed, 1993); (2) the high proportion of association revenue derived from annual meetings (about 30.2% of their annual income) (Shure, 2004); (3) the increasing conference expenses borne by association members (Oppermann & Chon, 1997); and (4) participant decision-making as influenced by the perception of meeting destination and participant needs and finances (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). In hospitality and tourism research, interest has been growing in association meeting attendee behaviors or attendee information processing—information gathered from studies of these areas can help in the design of competitive conference marketing and management strategies.

From the perspective of attendee behaviors, the existing convention literature largely focuses on the site selection process (Go & Govers, 1999; Hu & Hiemstra, 1996) and the meeting participation process (Oppermann, 1995; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993; Um & Crompton, 1992). These studies identified criteria and factors of site selection and conceptualized the meeting participation process by examining motivators, facilitators, and inhibitors to convention attendance, which have contributed to managerial and research implications in the convention industry. However, relative to the hospitality and tourism literature, the convention literature lags far behind in-depth research. A more detailed and diverse approach should be used to analyze attendee behaviors.

In order to investigate attendee behaviors, this study is based on Keller's (1993, p. 2) conceptualization of customer-based brand equity as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand." The definition well delineates consumer behavior through the differential effect of brand knowledge as composed of two dimensions: brand awareness and a set of brand associations or brand image in the consumer's mind. In this

study, a professional association's major and regional meetings were sampled to identify the differential effect of brand knowledge by comparing them to each other in terms of brand satisfaction, Updated Expectation of Brand Value (UEBV), brand trust, and behavioral and attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL) based on attendees' previous experiences at meetings. Brand knowledge and its differential effect, which stem from conceptions of the brand in attendee minds, provide valuable information for associations as they explore attendee behaviors.

There are three objectives of this study. The first is to identify key brand associations in brand knowledge. The second is to investigate attendees' behaviors through the flow from brand knowledge (brand associations and brand awareness) to the differential effect of brand knowledge. This is captured by comparing a professional association's major and regional conference to each other in terms of mean scores of brand satisfaction, updated expectation of brand value (UEBV), brand trust, and attitudinal brand loyalty (ABL), especially the mediating effect of UEBV on brand trust-ABL link and the moderating effect of behavioral brand loyalty (BBL) within brand trust-(UEBV)-brand loyalty link. The final objective is to provide in-depth research about and managerial implications of conference attendees' behaviors from which sound conference management and marketing approached might be suggested.

To identify the proposed paths and the differential effect of brand knowledge at the I-CHRIE annual conference (IC) and regional CHRIE conferences (RC), this study sampled I-CHRIE members attending IC and or RC. It did so through an online survey system. The survey of IC attendees was initiated after the completion of the survey of RC attendees. Since the study was based on past experiences with the conferences, members who had not attended IC or RC were excluded. The survey instrument was administered to the target sample via the K-State Online survey system.

The response rate for this study was 20.1% (213 out of 1,036) for IC and 19.4% (201 out of 1,036) for RC. Demographic characteristics were similar across the two samples: doctoral degree holders (IC: 67% vs. RC: 61%); employment in academia (IC: 91% vs. RC: 81%); and the gender ratio (IC: 58% male to 42% female vs. RC: 55% male to 45% female). All responses to the RC survey were accounted for by attendees of the Asia Pacific CHRIE conference (26%), followed by Euro CHRIE (23%), KOMA (8%), South East (8%), and others (35%). Responses from different RC were incorporated into one composite data set that was compared to the IC data. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and/or structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses

were used to test (1) construct validity, (2) measurement and structural invariance across IC and RC, and (3) relationships among constructs through simultaneous SEM analysis across two samples.

Major Findings

To test the proposed structural paths and disclose the differential effect of brand knowledge, hypotheses 1–11 were checked across the two samples using SEM and independent samples t tests. The letter “S” stands for supported, whereas “PS” and “NS” indicates partially supported and not supported, respectively.

Hypothesis 1 (S)

Professional education is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2 (S)

Social networking is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 (S)

Site selection is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4 (S)

Staff service is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5 (PS)

Self-image congruence is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6 (NS)

Brand awareness is positively associated with brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 7 (S)

Brand satisfaction is positively associated with brand trust.

Hypothesis 8 (S)

Brand satisfaction is positively associated with UEBV.

Hypothesis 9 (S)

UEBV is positively associated with brand trust.

Hypothesis 10 (S)

Brand trust is positively associated with ABL.

Hypothesis 11a (S)

Brand satisfaction is more favorably perceived from the I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11b (S)

UEBV is more favorably perceived from the I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11c (NS)

Brand trust is more favorably perceived from the I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

Hypothesis 11d (S)

ABL is more favorably perceived from the I-CHRIE conference than regional CHRIE conferences.

All proposed paths were supported except for relationships between self-image congruence and brand satisfaction ($\gamma_{15} = -.01$, $t = -.19$) for IC and brand awareness and brand satisfaction (IC: $\gamma_{16} = -.17$, $t = -2.56$ vs RC: $\gamma_{16} = -.17$, $t = -2.45$). Additionally, brand awareness exhibited a negative direction as opposed to H6, although it was significantly associated with brand satisfaction.

Specifically, first, most brand associations positively influence brand satisfaction: professional education (IC: $\gamma_{11} = .50$, $t = 7.43$ vs. RC: $\gamma_{11} = .31$, $t = 4.27$); social networking (IC: $\gamma_{12} = .20$, $t = 2.39$ vs. RC: $\gamma_{12} = .32$, $t = 4.16$); site selection (IC: $\gamma_{13} = .22$, $t = 3.42$ vs. RC: $\gamma_{13} = .15$, $t = 2.10$); and staff service (IC: $\gamma_{14} = .27$, $t = 4.77$ vs. RC: $\gamma_{14} = .24$, $t = 3.31$). Self-image congruence-brand satisfaction path for RC showed a statistically positive relationship ($\gamma_{15} = .25$, $t = 5.03$) although it turned out to be non-significant to IC. Second, brand satisfaction positively affected both UEBV (IC: $\beta_{21} = .84$, $t = 13.84$ vs. RC: $\beta_{21} = .86$, $t = 8.10$) and brand trust (IC: $\beta_{31} = .53$, $t = 6.43$ vs. RC: $\beta_{31} = .81$, $t = 7.65$) while UEBV positively influences brand trust (IC: $\beta_{32} = .39$, $t = 4.80$ vs. RC: $\beta_{32} = .17$, $t = 2.13$). These findings indicated that UEBV partially mediated the effect of brand satisfaction on brand trust with a significant indirect effect (IC: $\beta_{IE} = 0.33$, $t = 4.53$ vs. RC: $\beta_{IE} = 0.15$, $t = 2.06$) (Holland, 1988; Sobel, 1990). The stronger mediating effect of UEBV for IC than for RC led to higher parameter estimates in a brand satisfaction-brand trust IC path than in the RC path. Finally, brand trust was positively related to ABL (IC: $\beta_{43} = .74$, $t = 11.80$ vs. RC: $\beta_{43} = .83$, $t = 14$).

To test hypotheses 11a, 11b, 11c, and 11d, which were designed to capture the differential effect of brand knowledge by comparing the mean scores of brand satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and ABL between IC and RC, this study conducted independent samples t tests to identify statistically significant mean differences. Results from the tests show that all of the constructs for IC were proved to be statistically higher than RC except for brand trust (IC: 4.61 vs. RC: 4.48, t -value: .947); brand satisfaction (IC: 5.06 vs. RC: 4.54, t -value: 4.09), UEBV (IC: 4.68 vs. RC: 4.33, t -value: 2.663), and ABL (IC: 4.90 vs. RC: 4.07, t -value: 6.095). These findings presented sufficient evidence that IC was more favorably evaluated than RC, supporting H11a, H11b, and H11d. In summary, most hypotheses were supported except for H5 (partially supported), H6, and H11c.

To test the moderating effect of BBL, hypotheses 12–14 were checked using the structural invariance test over IC. Respondents to the IC survey were divided into high ($N = 107$) and low ($N = 106$) BBL groups, based on a median-split on their BBL.

Hypothesis 12 (S)

Indirect path from brand satisfaction to brand trust via UEBV is stronger to high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Hypothesis 13 (NS)

Direct path from brand satisfaction to brand trust is stronger to high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

Hypothesis 14 (NS)

Brand trust-ABL path is stronger to high BBL attendees than low BBL attendees.

To test H12 to H14 in conjunction with the moderating effect of BBL on paths in a conceptual model, the chi-square difference test was employed between the baseline model and full path invariance of the structural model. Because of significant chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2(4) = 11, p < .05$), the moderating effect of BBL was inferred across the two groups.

Due to sufficient evidence of a moderator effect of BBL, chi-square difference tests were conducted to ascertain whether differences in parameter estimates were statistically significant across the two groups. First, with respect to the path from brand satisfaction to UEBV, the high BBL group had a higher path coefficient than the low BBL group with a significant chi-square difference (high: $\gamma_{11} = .90, t = 10.90$ vs. low: $\gamma_{11} = .73, t = 7.28, \Delta\chi^2(1) = 10, p < .05$). Second, the path from UEBV to brand trust was stronger to the high BBL group than to the low BBL group (high: $\beta_{21} = .47, t = 3.67$ vs. low: $\beta_{21} = .31, t = 3.36, \Delta\chi^2(1) = 6.8, p < .05$) with a significant chi-square difference. The first two findings supported H12. Third, as opposed to H13, the path from brand satisfaction to brand trust was statistically stronger for the low loyalty group than the high BBL group (high: $\gamma_{21} = .46, t = 3.69$ vs. low: $\gamma_{21} = .59, t = 6.37, \Delta\chi^2(1) = 4.4, p < .05$). This unexpected result can be attributed to the stronger mediating effect of UEBV on the brand satisfaction-brand trust path in the high BBL group than in the low BBL group (high: $\beta_{IE} = 0.42, t = 3.48$ vs. low: $\beta_{IE} = 0.23, t = 3.05$) (Holland, 1988; Sobel, 1990). Finally, according to the non-significant chi-square difference between the two paths from brand trust to ABL across the two groups, the path coefficient was not found to be statistically higher in the low BBL group than in the high BBL group (high: $\beta_{32} = .72, t = 8.58$ vs. low: $\beta_{32} = .76, t = 8.77, \Delta\chi^2(1) = 0.7, p > .05$), implying that BBL does not moderate the path across the two groups. Thus, H14 was not supported.

Discussions and Conclusion

According to simultaneous SEM across IC and RC, professional education, staff service, site selection, and social networking are positively related to brand satisfaction whereas brand awareness is negatively associated with it. Because brand satisfaction is a starting point for showing effect with UEBV, brand trust, and ABL, these four brand associations are presumed to be major sources of the differential effect of brand knowledge between IC and RC, suggesting important implications for conference marketing and management.

Professional education is a major benefit of attending conferences and thus motivates people to attend conferences (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993). Professional education can be construed from achievement motivation (Butler, 1999). To increase satisfaction with a conference, the educational programs offered by association meetings should be designed to satisfy attendees' achievement motivation. According to Madsen (2003), social networking occurs when someone invites you to engage in a relationship. A significant key competence in relationships is the negotiation of personal meaning. Those who fail to establish this code of interaction may feel isolated and excluded, thereby reducing satisfaction (Brown, 2001). Expanding relationships with other colleagues or professionals thus serves to motivate participation in a conference (Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Price, 1993) and contributes to satisfaction with the conference. Site selection has been a key in conference management and marketing (Go & Govers, 1999) in determining attendance level and thus the success of the meeting. Also, a conference venue can serve as an extrinsic cue that prospective attendees use as a basis for deciding to participate. Therefore, positive experiences with the conference venue contribute to overall satisfaction with the conference. That is, cumulatively satisfied with such key factors, attendees are likely to favorably update their expectations of brand value, to build up brand trust, and thus to nurture brand loyalty to their conferences.

Moreover, positive relationships existed on each path for brand satisfaction-UEBV, UEBV-brand trust, brand satisfaction-brand trust, and brand trust-ABL. It should be noted that there is a mediating effect of UEBV on the brand satisfaction-brand trust path. UEBV was found to serve as a partial mediator on the brand satisfaction-brand trust path across the two groups, suggesting that brand trust, the firm expectation that the brand will perform according to its promise, firms up through UEBV as well as through brand satisfaction. From the perspective of UEBV, brand value is a significant contributor to brand trust in the sense that customers seek an

exchange partner that will provide maximum value (Kotler, 2000) and is committed to developing relationships because the exchange partner delivers highly valued benefits to the brand (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

This study further extended the proposed theoretical model by dividing it into high and low BBL groups designed to unveil the differential characteristics or mechanism between two groups. Except for the brand trust-ABL path, BBL was found to moderate all paths. In the indirect path (brand satisfaction to brand trust via UEBV), high BBL attendees hold significantly higher relationships than low BBL attendees. This finding supports the notion that as high BBL attendees sustain a longer relationship with a particular conference than low BBL attendees, high BBL attendees experience more cumulative satisfaction and update favorable expectations of brand value through which more (relational) benefits are perceived, thereby solidifying expectations about confidence in brand (brand trust). That is, the duration of the relationship (behavioral loyalty) was confirmed with regard to making a significant difference to the indirect path.

The direct path (brand satisfaction-brand trust), however, revealed a paradoxical finding: low BBL attendees displayed a stronger tendency than high BBL attendees. This unexpected finding arose from the higher mediating effect of UEBV on brand satisfaction to brand trust in the high BBL group than the low BBL group, as indicated by the indirect effect. In other words, the direct path became stronger for the low BBL group than the high BBL group upon the more powerful mediating effect of UEBV in the high BBL group on the direct path. This finding indicates the theoretical notion that value drives behavioral loyalty.

Finally, BBL was not found to moderate the brand trust-ABL path. This result is consistent with Dick and Basu's (1994) argument that loyalty should be illuminated on two dimensions of behavior and relative attitude and is determined by the strength of the relationship between two dimensions. That is, high BBL can pair with high or low ABL, and vice versa because the relationship between two dimensions is mediated by social norms, situational factors, and other explanatory variables (Dick & Baus, 1994; Odin et al., 2001). Hence, to enhance the predictive ability of brand loyalty, researchers or practitioners should increase efforts to integrate two notions of behavior and attitude into the measurement of brand loyalty.

Brand loyalty presents invaluable benefits to associations in a situation in which associations in similar disciplines compete for potential attendees. Benefits from brand loyal

customers lead to declining marketing costs (Aaker, 1991). The reduced marketing costs are attributed to (1) lower costs in maintaining loyal customers than creating new ones; (2) positive word-of-mouth by loyal customers; (3) low likelihood of switching to competitors; and (4) less price sensitivity (Reichheld, 1993). These benefits further enhance market share and profitability. Thus, associations should build their conference marketing and management on brand loyalty by carefully designing benefits considered important by attendees. Persistent delivery of high-quality education programs, selection of alternative venues, and provision of networking opportunities enable associations to obtain cumulative satisfaction, UEBV, brand trust, and consequently brand loyalty. Retention of brand loyal attendees induces deep commitment to the conferences and great resistance to other conferences' marketing strategies, thereby contributing to high revenue and market share.

Limitation and Future Study

Despite the importance of this study, it had limitations. Since UEBV is an exploratory approach, little previous research on UEBV is available to conceptually and empirically clarify the concept. Subsequent studies should test UEBV in various business contexts. For instance, the effect of perceived quality and sacrifice on UEBV should be examined from the perspective of high and low loyalty groups. In determining value, the high loyalty group usually places more weight on quality, whereas the low loyalty group is sensitive to sacrifice. That is, the high loyalty group is more likely to perceive favorable UEBV and develop more trust and commitment. The moderating effect of loyalty on the perceived quality/sacrifice-UEBV relationship would theoretically contribute to the generalization of the construct.

Due to the use of sample conferences from the same association, the findings may not rigorously represent the relationships among constructs unveiled in this study and thus may not be generalized to all association meetings. Specifically, the findings were exposed to the threat of sampling and nonresponse errors.

Sampling error exists when some characteristics, but not all, of people in the population of interest are surveyed (Dillman, 2000). Although sampling error cannot be completely eliminated and always occurs for a random sample, it can be minimized through larger samples. Therefore, selection of multiple association meetings is advised in a future study to further reduce sampling error, thereby enhancing external validity. It is also important to survey

meetings from associations with different characteristics – for example, academic (e.g., I-CHRIE) vs. non-academic (e.g., Pacific Asia Travel Association) associations. Doing so would not only increase the generalizability of findings but also reveal distinct attendee behaviors between different types of association meetings, thereby enriching managerial and research implications.

Dillman (2000) pointed out that nonresponse error occurs when people who participate in a survey are different from those who do not, thereby posing a threat to external validity of a study. To reduce the threat of nonresponse error, minimum response rate of 50% should be achieved (Fowler, 2001). In consideration of response rates for IC (20.1%) and RC (19.4%), it is assumed that this study might have nonresponse error. Therefore, controlling for nonresponse error requires acceptable survey protocols designed to achieve higher response rate. This study recommends Dillman's (2000) four-time-contact email survey: a pre-notice; the questionnaire; a thank-you/reminder; and a replacement questionnaire.

Self-image congruence was not significantly associated with brand satisfaction in the context of IC. However, a non-significant finding could have resulted from a suppressed effect. As previously noted in the literature review, considering the relevance and importance of self-image congruence in the context of the conference, a future study should reexamine the conceptual model by including self-image congruence without other brand associations. Because self-image is composed of four multiple self-images, it should be further divided into four dimensions so that the effect of each self-image will be captured within the model. This would lead to the findings as to which dimension in self-image would be the most congruent with the generalized image of conference attendees, suggesting valuable implications in (re)positioning a conference in target attendees' self-images.

Furthermore, to precisely unveil the mechanism of brand loyalty, another future study is advised in which both BBL and ABL are integrated into one brand loyalty construct, in order to investigate the moderating effect of brand loyalty by dividing brand loyalty into high and low brand loyalty group. The findings will present more accurate information about the brand loyalty mechanism because brand loyalty is measured on both dimensions of behavior and attitude.

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Appendix A.1 - Cover Letter for I-CHRIE Annual Conference

Dear I-CHRIE member,

Growing attention is being paid to attendee behaviors as associations are increasingly concerned over the marketing and management of association annual conferences. This survey is designed to suggest an effective conference marketing and management strategy by examining conference attendee behaviors.

Dr. Ki-Joon Back, Associate Professor at Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel & Restaurant Management, University of Houston, and Jin-Soo Lee, Ph. D. candidate in Dept. of Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management and Dietetics at Kansas State University, respectfully request your participation in the survey. We fully recognize that you are busy and your time is valuable. YOUR INPUT IS THE CORNERSTONE TO ACTUALIZE THE STUDY.

All responses to the survey are confidential and anonymous, and participation is strictly voluntary. If you have any questions about the study or your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact any of the following individuals:

- Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 785-532-3224, comply@ksu.edu
- Jin-Soo Lee, 785-532-2213, lee4@humec.ksu.edu
- Dr. Ki-Joon Back, kback@uh.edu

We very much appreciate your participation in the survey.

Respectfully,

Jin-Soo Lee, Ph. D. Candidate
HRIMD
Kansas State University

Ki-Joon Back, Ph. D.
Associate Professor, Major Professor
Conrad N. Hilton College
of Hotel & Restaurant Management
University of Houston

Appendix A.2 - Online Survey Instrument for I-CHRIE Annual Conference

Association Meeting Attendee Behaviors

Survey Description:

Thanks for your participation in this survey. Much attention has been paid to attendee behaviors as associations are increasingly concerned over the marketing and management of association annual conferences due to the high proportion of revenue derived from annual meetings. This survey is designed to suggest an effective strategy for conference marketing and management by examining conference attendee behaviors from attendee-based brand equity. Please answer each question, based on your experience of attending I-CHRIE annual conference (If you have no experience with the I-CHRIE conference, please do not participate in the survey). All responses to the survey are confidential and anonymous. Results will be reported in summary form only. Once again, your valuable input and time are greatly appreciated.

Opening Instructions:

Please read and answer all the questions, based on your experience of attending the I-CHRIE conference. Although some questions may look similar, they address different issues. Most questions use a 7-point scale. You are to click the number that best describes your opinion. Thank you.

Next

Association Meeting Attendee Behaviors

Page 1

Question 1 *** required ***

If you never attended the I-CHRIE conference, please do not participate in the survey

Have you ever attended the I-CHRIE conference?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Next

The following set of statements relates to your awareness of the I-CHRIE conference and benefits of attending the I-CHRIE conference. Please click the number that best represents your experience of attending the I-CHRIE conference.

Question 2 *** required ***

1 = Strongly Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Slightly Disagree
4 - Neutral | 5 - Slightly Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.1 I am familiar with the I-CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.2 Some characteristics of the I-CHRIE conference quickly come to my mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.3 The quality/reputation of keynote speakers at the I-CHRIE conference favorably influenced my decision to attend the conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.4 The quality/relevance of educational programs at the I-CHRIE conference favorably influenced my decision to attend the conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.5 The I-CHRIE conference provided the high quality continuing education opportunities that I need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.6 Attending the I-CHRIE conference bolstered my social networking.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.7 Social functions (e.g., banquets, receptions) at the I-CHRIE conference contributed to expanding my professional relationships with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.8 Attending the I-CHRIE conference was helpful in learning about job opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Slightly Disagree
4 - Neutral | 5 - Slightly Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.1 The I-CHRIE conference sites favorably influenced my decision to attend the conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.2 The I-CHRIE conferences were held in a safe environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.3 The I-CHRIE conferences were held in venues easily accessible from an airport.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.4 The I-CHRIE conference sites allowed affordable traveling expenses (e.g., airfare, lodging, meals).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.5 The I-CHRIE conference staff members had a good service attitude.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.6 The I-CHRIE conference staff members were well trained.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.7 The I-CHRIE conference staff members had good knowledge of their jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.8 The perceived overall quality for the I-CHRIE conference is excellent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.9 The perceived overall quality for the I-CHRIE conference is superior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.10 The perceived sacrifice (monetary, time, efforts) I made to attend the I-CHRIE conference is very high.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.11 The perceived sacrifice (monetary, time, efforts) I made to attend the I-CHRIE conference is very significant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Slightly Disagree
4 - Neutral | 5 - Slightly Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.1 Overall, I am satisfied with the I-CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.2 As a whole, I am happy with the I-CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3 Attending the I-CHRIE conference was a good decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.4 Having experienced the previous I-CHRIE conference, I expect future I-CHRIE conference to be worth the money.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5 Having experienced the previous I-CHRIE conference, I expect future I-CHRIE conference to offer benefits relative to the registration fee and traveling expenses I will pay.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.6 Having experienced the previous I-CHRIE conference, I expect future I-CHRIE conference to provide high value.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.7 I trust the I-CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.8 I rely on the I-CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.9 I have a firm expectation that the I-CHRIE conference will serve its stated objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.10 I consider myself loyal to the I-CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.11 I will continue to attend the I-CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.12 I am committed to maintaining a valued relationship with the I-CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page 4

The following set of statements relates to attendee imagery of the I-CHRIE conference. Please click the number that best represents your experience.

Question 5

1 = Strongly Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Slightly Disagree
4 - Neutral | 5 - Slightly Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.1 The typical attendees at the I-CHRIE conference have an image similar to how I perceive myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.2 The typical attendees at the I-CHRIE conference have an image similar to how I want to perceive myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.3 The typical attendees at the I-CHRIE conference have an image similar to how I am perceived by other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.4 The typical attendees at the I-CHRIE conference have an image similar to how I want other people to perceive me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

Association Meeting Attendee Behaviors

Page 5

The following set of statements relates to the attendance frequency of the I-CHRIE conference and other conferences. Please indicate the number of times that best represents your attendance in the past 5 years.

Question 6 **** required ****

How many times have you attended the I-CHRIE conference in the last 5 years?

(maximum of 200 characters)

Question 7 **** required ****

How many times have you attended a professional/academic conference other than the I-CHRIE conference in the last 5 years?

(maximum of 200 characters)

Next

Association Meeting Attendee Behaviors

Page 6

Finally, we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. Again, this information will be used only for statistical analyses. Please click the circle that best describes you.

Question 8

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Question 9

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ High school degree or equivalent
- ☐ Associate degree or technical certificate
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree

Question 10

Which of the following best describes your work environment?

- ☐ Industry (non-academia)
- ☐ Academia-faculty
- ☐ Academia-student
- ☐ Other

Appendix B.1 - Cover Letter for Regional CHRIE Conference

Dear I-CHRIE member,

Growing attention is being paid to attendee behaviors as associations are increasingly concerned over the marketing and management of association annual conferences. This survey is designed to suggest an effective conference marketing and management strategy by examining conference attendee behaviors.

Dr. Ki-Joon Back, Associate Professor at Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel & Restaurant Management, University of Houston, and Jin-Soo Lee, Ph. D. candidate in Dept. of Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management and Dietetics at Kansas State University, respectfully request your participation in the survey. Because we fully recognize that you are busy and your time is valuable, your participation in the survey will generate a \$2 donation to one of the following charity organizations (Children International, Christian Children's Fund, UNICEF, World Vision) of your choice to help starving children across the world.

All responses to the survey are confidential and anonymous, and participation is strictly voluntary. If you have any questions about the study or your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact any of the following individuals:

- Dr. Rick Scheidt, Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 785-532-3224, comply@ksu.edu
- Jin-Soo Lee, 785-532-2213, lee4@humec.ksu.edu
- Dr. Ki-Joon Back, kback@uh.edu

We very much appreciate your participation in the survey.

Respectfully,

Jin-Soo Lee, Ph. D. Candidate
HRIMD
Kansas State University

Ki-Joon Back, Ph. D.
Associate Professor, Major Professor
Conrad N. Hilton College
of Hotel & Restaurant Management
University of Houston

Appendix B.2 - Online Survey Instrument for Regional CHRIE Conference

SURVEY SYSTEM EM

Association Meeting Attendee Behaviors

Survey Description:

Thanks for your participation in this survey. Much attention has been paid to attendee behaviors as associations are increasingly concerned over the marketing and management of association annual conferences due to the high proportion of revenue derived from annual meetings. This survey is designed to suggest an effective conference marketing and management by examining conference attendee behaviors from attendee-based brand equity. Please answer each question, based on your experience of attending the most recent regional CHRIE conference (If you have no experience with the regional CHRIE conference, please do not participate in the survey). All responses to the survey are confidential and anonymous. Results will be reported in summary form only. Once again, your valuable input and time are greatly appreciated.

Opening Instructions:

Please read and answer all the questions, based on your experience of attending the most recent regional CHRIE conference. Although some questions may look similar, they address different issues. Most questions use a 7-point scale. You are to click the number that best describes your opinion. Thank you.

Next

Association Meeting Attendee Behaviors

Page 1

Question 1 **** required ****

If you never attended the regional CHRIE conference, please do not participate in the survey

Have you ever attended a regional CHRIE conference (e.g., Euro CHRIE, Canada CHRIE, Asia Pacific CHRIE, or other chapters of CHRIE)?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Question 2 **** required ****

Please choose from a drop down box the regional CHRIE conference that you have attended the most recently.

Question 3 **** required ****

Please choose from a drop down box one of the charity organizations that you want to donate \$2 to.

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Association Meeting Attendee Behaviors

Page 2

The following set of statements relates to your awareness of the regional CHRIE conference and benefits of attending the regional CHRIE conference. Please click the number that best represents your experience of attending the most recent regional CHRIE conference.

Question 4 *** required ***

1 = Strongly Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Slightly Disagree
4 - Neutral | 5 - Slightly Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.1 I am familiar with the regional CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.2 Some characteristics of the regional CHRIE conference quickly come to my mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.3 The quality/reputation of keynote speakers at the regional CHRIE conference favorably influenced my decision to attend the conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.4 The quality/relevance of educational programs at the regional CHRIE conference favorably influenced my decision to attend the conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.5 The regional CHRIE conference provided the high quality continuing education opportunities that I need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.6 Attending the regional CHRIE conference bolstered my social networking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.7 Social functions (e.g., banquets, receptions) at the regional CHRIE conference contributed to expanding my professional relationships with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.8 Attending the regional CHRIE conference was helpful in gaining job opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Slightly Disagree
4 - Neutral | 5 - Slightly Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.1 The regional CHRIE conference sites favorably influenced my decision to attend the conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.2 The regional CHRIE conference was held in a safe environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.3 The regional CHRIE conference was held in a venue easily accessible from an airport.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.4 The regional CHRIE conference sites allowed affordable traveling expenses (e.g., airfare, lodging, meals).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.5 The regional CHRIE conference staff members had a good service attitude.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.6 The regional CHRIE conference staff members were well trained.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.7 The regional CHRIE conference staff members had good knowledge of their jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.8 The perceived overall quality for the regional CHRIE conference is excellent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.9 The perceived overall quality for the regional CHRIE conference is superior.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.10 The perceived sacrifice (monetary, time, efforts) I made to attend the regional CHRIE conference is very high.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.11 The perceived sacrifice (monetary, time, efforts) I made to attend the regional CHRIE conference is very significant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Slightly Disagree
4 - Neutral | 5 - Slightly Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.1 Overall, I am satisfied with the regional CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.2 As a whole, I am happy with the regional CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.3 Attending the regional CHRIE conference was a good decision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.4 Having experienced the recent regional CHRIE conference, I expect future regional CHRIE conference to be worth the money.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.5 Having experienced the recent regional CHRIE conference, I expect future regional CHRIE conference to offer benefits relative to the registration fee and traveling expenses I will pay.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.6 Having experienced the recent regional CHRIE conference, I expect future regional CHRIE conference to provide high value.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.7 I trust the regional CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.8 I rely on the regional CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.9 I have a firm expectation that the regional CHRIE conference will serve its stated objectives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.10 I consider myself loyal to the regional CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.11 I will continue to attend the regional CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.12 I am committed to maintaining a valued relationship with the regional CHRIE conference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Page 4

The following set of statements relates to attendee imagery of the regional CHRIE conference. Please click the number that best represents your experience.

Question 7

1 = Strongly Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Slightly Disagree
4 - Neutral | 5 - Slightly Agree | 6 - Agree | 7 - Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.1 The typical attendees at the regional CHRIE conference have an image similar to how I perceive myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.2 The typical attendees at the regional CHRIE conference have an image similar to how I want to perceive myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.3 The typical attendees at the regional CHRIE conference have an image similar to how I am perceived by other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7.4 The typical attendees at the regional CHRIE conference have an image similar to how I want other people to perceive me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Finally, we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself. Again, this information will be used only for statistical analyses. Please click the circle that best describes you.

Question 8

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Question 9

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ High school degree or equivalent
- ☐ Associate degree or technical certificate
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral degree

Question 10

Which of the following best describes your work environment?

- ☐ Industry (non-academia)
- ☐ Academia-faculty
- ☐ Academia-student
- ☐ Other

Done